

**THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL AS AN INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER IN IMPROVING
LEARNER ACHIEVEMENT IN TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY OF TWO
PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF SOWETO IN GAUTENG PROVINCE**

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the role of the principal as an instructional leader in two successful township primary schools in challenging circumstances. It examines instructional strategies used by principals of the two schools that may account for high levels of learner achievement and explores how these successful leaders deploy leadership styles and management approaches to deal with prevailing challenging circumstances that affect their schools academically and other spheres of governance and management.

Sixteen participants were involved including 2 principals, 4 Heads of department (HODs), 4 educators, 4 parents from the two schools and 2 district officials under who both schools account. Using qualitative approaches, triangulation of data was achieved through semi-structured interviews, observation and document analysis.

The study found that the key instructional leadership approaches used by these principals were promoting teamwork, active participation, collective decision making, sharing of responsibilities, collaboration/collegiality and distribution of tasks amongst multiple leaders or people. The claims made by the principals were corroborated by educators, parents, members of the School Management Team (SMT) and district management teams.

Data also indicated that the principals relied on a combination of different leadership styles and efficient and effective management approaches with their subordinates to garner the enthusiastic implementation of instructional approaches which are claimed to yield good learner outcomes in Annual National Assessment (ANA) tests.

The study suggests that there might be a strong link between leadership styles and management approaches on one hand and learner performance on the other. Further, the data suggests that the application of appropriate management systems and relevant leadership styles can contribute to institutional resilience against the prevailing challenges which tend to depress performance in many schools in similar circumstances.

The findings of the study have several important implications including:

- Schools as organisations require the collective effort of all stakeholders in order to achieve their objectives or goals.
- That 'one size fits all' form of leadership has no place in different environments but that more often than not, a combination of different leadership styles and management approaches should be explored in an attempt to realize a common vision of an organisation.

The study makes specific recommendations for a more broad based research agenda to examine factors which contribute to resilience and success in schools operating in challenging circumstances. It also calls for more contextualised studies in specific schools to explore the leadership forms that have greatest potential for delivering better learning outcomes in schools facing challenging circumstances.

KEY WORDS: resilient schools, challenging circumstances, leadership, management, instructional leadership, learner outcomes

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Problem

Studies show that South African school children are performing below international standards in Mathematics and Literacy/Languages (Fleisch, 2008). Mathematics and Languages form the basis for understanding any content of any subject or text. For instance, if the learner lacks any basic skills of reading, writing, counting or arithmetic, he or she may struggle with comprehension of any text presented to him/her. Furthermore, subjects like Biology, Natural Science and Technology, Accounting or Economic and Management Sciences, and Mathematics involve a lot of arithmetic or counting. It goes without saying that all subjects require the learner to know the basics of languages in order to facilitate the process of expressing his/her thoughts verbally or in writing.

Thus, this research seeks to reveal the underlying challenges faced by township schools with the main focus on the schools that still perform better than others in similar circumstances. Christie and Lingard (2001) categorize schools which still do well academically under adverse conditions as 'resilient schools'.

The report on Annual National Assessment (ANA) of 2012 in Grade 1-6 and 9 captures specific challenges that South African (SA) schools are faced with in different parts of the country. Analysis of results in general and items analysed in Mathematics and Languages as indicated in the ANA reports of 2012, 2013 and 2014, clearly point to where an intervention is needed in each district and provinces of South Africa. Public and Independent schools are included in this report as participants in the ANA programme.

ANA reports over the last three years (2012, 2013 and 2014), have shown that schools generally are not doing well in Mathematics and Languages from Grade 1-9. However, in the lower grades the performance seem to be better than that at higher grades (Grades 10-12), although the performance of our learners nationally is still below international standards (Fleisch, 2008).

This study examined the role of the principal towards learner achievement in two township primary schools of Gauteng Province in South Africa. The focus of this study was on the schools that emerge as successful sites of learning under challenging or difficult

circumstances, despite poor ANA results at district, provincial and national level. As a researcher, I wanted to understand how these schools achieve better results, despite the challenging circumstances under which they operate and the general underperformance by South African schools, as indicated in the same report of Annual National Assessment.

It was the author's intention to identify and understand how the various factors contributed to high learner achievement from a case study of two 'resilient schools'. The significance of the study is that it will inform policy makers about the aspects into which the Minister of Education and other important stakeholders need to pay special attention, so as to share these examples of good practices of 'resilient schools' with other schools under similar conditions. Sustaining high learner achievement over a long period of time may be the motivating factor to other schools to employ the strategies that resilient schools use to deal with challenges that may hinder delivery of high quality of education.

Studies have shown that management of teaching and learning accounts for an improvement of between 5-7% of learner achievement across schools (Leithwood, et al., 2006; Hoadley, 2007: 1). This statistic is an acknowledgement that leadership and management have a small but significant role to play in influencing learner outcomes or learner achievement.

Therefore, I am proposing that the role of a principal as an instructional leader (Bush, 2007) needs to be examined so as to see to what extent leadership and management have an effect on learner performance. The author believes that if the role of the principal is not scrutinised we may base our conclusion only on the superficial analysis of results, without looking in detail to the other contributing factors to learner performance.

In addition, Bush and Glover (2002) posit that instructional leadership focuses mainly on teaching and learning. Southworth (2002) argues that instructional leadership is strongly concerned with teaching and learning, including professional learning of teachers as well as student growth. Bush and Glover (2009) contend that the role of principals is to take a school-wide view and that they have a direct responsibility for the quality of learning and teaching, and for pupil achievement. This implies having high standards but also monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of learning outcomes. Hence, principals have an obligation to do this according to their job description (Employment of Educators' Act 76 of 1998).

Bush and Glover (2009) further argue that school principals who are focused strongly on management of teaching and learning would undertake the following activities:

- Oversee the curriculum across the school;
- Ensure that the lessons take place;
- Evaluate learner performance through an analysis of external examination results and internal assessments;
- Monitor the work of HODs and educators within their subjects;
- Conduct class visits, give feedback to teachers and support them.

The author strongly believes that a school that does not monitor, evaluate and support its staff will sooner than later slip into a *laissez faire* kind of leadership. Obviously, under such leadership there is no accountability but only chaos and complacency (Kotter, 1990).

This chapter will give the background to the research problem, define the key concepts/terms, give the aims and objectives of the study, give an overview of the study to be undertaken, including research questions, show the significance of the study and justification thereof, indicate the delimitation and limitations of the study. It will show the overall structure of the report, summary and conclusion.

1.2 Background

South Africa was subjected to a minority rule which was predominantly white. The education policies were determined on the basis of colour, race and ethnicity prior to the first non-racial democratic elections that took place in April of 1994. Prior to that, curriculum delivery offered in Black, Coloured, Indian and White schools was determined on racial lines and resources were distributed unequally to the South African population at school level and other departments. School policies were influenced to a large extent by the apartheid legislations which were drawn up in favour of White minority over the Black majority in S.A. The majority did not have a say in decision-making at higher levels of government, hence, they were also not represented until 1994 after the 1st democratic elections which were won by the majority of Black people represented by the African National Congress.

It is only then that the education system became one national department and started to serve the interests of all South Africans on an equal basis. Blacks started access to the former 'model-c' schools which happened to be fully resourced in terms of financial, human and material/physical resources. Educational policies were then changed in line with the requirement of a democratic system of governance.

The School Governing Bodies (SGBs) were then elected to govern schools in line with the South African Schools Act of 1996. Democratic structures like teacher unions, School Management Teams, School Governing Body associations, Student Representative Councils (SRC), Student Associations were then allowed to operate freely and deal with all challenges that they were confronted with, some of which were as a result of an oppressive apartheid system prior to 1994 (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996).

These changes had far-reaching consequences on how schools should be run and as such school leadership and management had to make a choice to allow the forces of change to chart a new way forward that was inclusive of everyone, with a common interest in taking our institutions of learning forward. This culminated into a common vision for the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE). Today, this vision says:

“Every learner should be assisted to do well at school so that they leave our centres of education with all the necessary skills, knowledge, values and qualifications which will create the best chance of success in their adult life” (Gauteng Department of Education, 2014).

The mission of the GDE is that, every teacher must be in class, on time teaching every day and learners must learn all the time. A huge responsibility has been placed on principals by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) to ensure that the organisational goals are achieved. The South African Standards for Principals Draft Policy (2005) states that:

“the core purpose of principals is to provide leadership and management in all areas of the school to enable the creation and support of conditions under which high quality of teaching and learning can take place and promote the highest possible standards of learner achievement” (Department of Basic Education, 2005).

The Department of Education believes that effective management and leadership articulates with well-conceived, structured and needs-driven management and leadership development, and that this is the key transformation in South African education (Education

Management and Leadership Development Draft Policy Framework, 2004). In addition, the English National College for School Leadership (NCSL), 2007 states that management of teaching and learning depends on developing policies to address this issue and to ensure that curriculum delivery is being implemented.

1.3 The rationale of the study

The purpose of my study is to examine the most effective and efficient ways and strategies which are used by successful principals in raising and sustaining high levels of learner achievement in difficult contexts. For instance, evidence as shown by Christie and Lingard (2001) indicate that there are still best performing schools in our townships despite results from the ANA report showing the poor performance in general.

According to Gurr (et al., 2006), as cited by Poopedi (2011) evidence suggests that successful school leaders promote the culture of collegiality, collaboration, support and trust. This culture of collaboration, support and trust is firmly rooted in their democratic and social justice values and beliefs.

Given this background, this study engages extensively with the contributions of other role players like staff, parents and DBE, in the leadership and management circle. However, the study looked at the indirect or direct influence that other external forces and factors have in shaping the kind of leadership and management approaches that were used at the two schools. The main focus was on the role of the principal as an instructional leader in promoting high learner achievement; as such his/her leadership styles and management approaches were under scrutiny in order to account for this improvement in learners' performance.

1.4 Research Assumptions

The study is based on the following assumptions:

- 1.4.1 School leadership contributes towards improved learner achievement and the success of the school depends to a large extent on the effectiveness and efficiency of leadership and management of the school.

- 1.4.2 Principals of successful township schools emerge as being successful partly because of their skills, knowledge, values and positive attitude that allow them to deal effectively with socio-economic, political, cultural and academic challenges at their schools.
- 1.4.3 Successful leaders and managers in township primary schools employ strategies that are informed by certain theoretical framework and/or management approaches that they subscribe to.

1.5 Aims of the study

Based on the research assumptions stated above, the aims of the study were to:

- 1.5.1 Identify effective and efficient ways that account for high levels of learner achievement.
- 1.5.2 Determine which strategies are used and how these strategies are used by the successful school leaders to deal with challenges of socio-economic, political, cultural, social and academic factors.
- 1.5.3 Establish which leadership styles and management approaches are employed by successful principals in township schools of South Africa, to inform high levels of achievement by learners.

1.6 Research Questions

The aims of the study are translated into the following questions:

- 1.6.1 What are the most effective and efficient ways that account for high levels of learner achievement?
- 1.6.2 How do leaders of successful township primary schools deal with the challenges that may derail progress and negatively affect learner performance if not attended to, in particular: unemployment, poverty, crime, abuse, teenage pregnancy, peer pressure, bullying, gender stereotypes, cultural and offensive religious practices, resources?
- 1.6.3 Which leadership styles and management approaches do successful principals use to raise and maintain high levels of learner achievement?

1.7 The significance of the study

The significance of the study is that it revealed the possible contributing factors towards high learner performance in schools that operate under adverse conditions. It showed that there is indeed a link between leadership and learner performance or learner outcomes. It confirmed the assumption that resources have no significant impact on learner achievement. It exposed the limitations or gaps of the study that require further research. It revealed elements of good practice for future planning or as a motivation to other schools.

1.8 The limitations and delimitation of the study

The study was limited to only two primary schools in Soweto which are situated in Gauteng Province. Only 16 participants comprising of principals, HODs (SMTs), parents and district officials, were involved and the conclusions of the study were based on the actual findings on the research sites, and this informed my hypothesis and argument thereof. The focus was on two selected resilient schools due to their success under difficult circumstances.

The two schools were selected on the basis of their ANA results which were better than other schools under similar conditions in the townships of Soweto. Due to the limited (6 months) time available at my disposal for research purposes and the nature of research, only a reasonable and realistic sample of participants or schools could be studied, without compromising the validity and reliability of the research findings.

Another limitation of the study is that of the time spent on research site and the availability of the participants and documents for analysis purposes. Only the ANA results were used along with leadership styles and management approaches of two principals including document analysis and observation, to draw my conclusion at the end of the research.

1.9 The overall structure of the report

This report begins with Chapter One which deals with the introduction within which the research problem is articulated. The background to the study, the aims and objectives of the study, the research questions, the justification/rationale/significance of the study, the

research assumptions and the limitations/delimitations of the study are all captured and explained in this chapter.

Chapter Two focuses on the Literature Review. It begins with the introduction and discusses the meanings of major concepts associated with the research problem. It touches on the major theoretical approaches of the study and it reflects on the South African context. It gives a summary and conclusion with a strong argument.

Chapter Three focuses on the methodology. It starts with the research design, followed by data collection methods, criteria for the selection of participants, issues of reliability and validity, sampling techniques, profile of respondents, data analysis and interpretation, qualitative and quantitative data, ethical considerations and limitations of the study.

Chapter Four focuses on presentation. It starts with the introduction, followed by profiles for School A & B, themes, document analysis, observation for both School A & B and conclusion.

Chapter Five focuses on the analysis of the data collected from the participants and documents from both schools and Department of Basic Education including GDE, and discussions. It begins with an introduction followed by research findings per theme and per participant, limitations of the study, comparison of ANA results and conclusion.

Chapter Six focuses on the summary which starts with the introduction within which the main argument is encapsulated, followed by conclusions, recommendations and implications for further research.

1.10 Summary

This chapter focussed on the research problem. Its emphasis was based on the acknowledgement that our learners are performing below international standards generally. The research conducted previously shows that learners in South Africa are struggling in Mathematics and Languages, hence, their underperformance (Fleisch, 2008). ANA reports

for 2012, 2013 and 2014 provided data to support this argument of underperformance in SA schools, specifically in Mathematics and Languages. (Department of Basic Education, 2014).

Secondly, this chapter has pulled together the research topic for my study. The study is examining the role of the principal as an instructional leader in improving learner performance in two township primary schools of Soweto in Gauteng Province. The study is thus limited to the two schools which were used as case studies in this regard.

Thirdly, the manner, in which the research unfolded in a form of the background; the rationale/justification/significance of the study; the research assumptions; aims and objectives of the study, has been encapsulated in this chapter.

Lastly, this chapter has also raised relevant issues which may influence the conclusion of the research findings. For instance, it begins by proposing that there are many contributing factors towards learner performance. An argument was made to say that schools succeed partly on the basis of their resilience and a combination of effective leadership styles and clear management approaches.

1.11 Conclusion

This study acknowledges what seems to be a serious concern and problem in our SA education system regarding poor learner performance. However it promises to reveal some of the good practices in some of the successful schools under adverse conditions, which are called 'resilient schools' due to their persistent and constant high and sustainable learner performance (Christie and Lingard, 2001).

The understanding and assumption is that there is a link between leadership and learner performance (Leithwood, et al., 2006; Hoadley, 2007). The study has revealed that there are other possible contributing factors towards high learner performance in township schools which are historically disadvantaged. Therefore, the sampling of two township primary schools of Soweto was deliberate and purposeful, in the sense that lack of sufficient

resources do not necessarily hinder high learner performance, partly due to the the resilience of those schools.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In my literature review, I brought together different perspectives of researchers based on their research findings in order to reveal how school leaders succeed with overcoming the challenges that they encounter in their institutions. Harris (2009) admits that some of the schools which operate under challenging circumstances still produce good results under such conditions. Poopedi (2011) alludes to some of the external contributing factors to the challenges faced by historically disadvantaged schools in the townships of South Africa as being challenges of drugs, violence and crime amongst others.

In addition, Trupp (1999), as cited by Poopedi (2011), contends that there is added responsibility for schools where unemployment and crime is rife, poor housing and health are prevalent. Poopedi (2011) argues that despite restructuring of funding by our government in South Africa, in favour of the historically disadvantaged communities in South African schools, their white counterparts perform far much better than our African or black children. The 1998 National Norms and Standards for School Funding (amended in 2005) attest to this claim according to Poopedi (2011).

I have reflected on the conceptual framework and theories that researchers and/or authors use to support or criticise different leadership approaches. My objectives are based on the hypothesis that says school leadership contributes towards improved learner achievement. Both international and national trends and perspectives have been reflected upon in relation to my research.

According to research findings the South African Constitution of 1996 and the South African Schools Act No.84 of 1996 are not sufficiently implemented to influence change in schools or society (Vergie, 2012). The research contends that whilst schools have discussed the ten values of the Constitution of South Africa but living up to these values remains a challenge in practice. The values enshrined in the Constitution are: democracy; equality; open society; human dignity (Ubuntu); non-racism and non-sexism; social justice and gender equity; rule

of law; reconciliation (tolerance); respect and accountability (The South African constitution, section 29).

Furthermore, Gandebo (2007) argues that it is necessary for principals at schools to distribute, collaborate and involve SMTs in executing their instructional leadership responsibilities to enhance quality delivery of the curriculum. His findings from research conducted in 2007 reveal that instructional leadership practices make a significant contribution to the success of the schools or learners. However, he acknowledges that there are overwhelming responsibilities of a manager which can compromise the core business, which is teaching and learning. The author supports this view and believes it is based on empirical evidence as opposed to weaker anecdotal evidence.

Thus, effective leadership of principals exert an indirect but powerful influence on effectiveness of the school and on student achievement (Hallinger and Heck, 1996; Blasé and Blasé, 1999; Fullan, 2001 and Sergiovanni, 1990). Instructional leadership is a key factor in improvement of schools. Spillane, et al. (2005) suggests that school instructional leadership “should be understood as distributed practices stretched over schools’ social and situational contexts”. From this perspective, instructional leadership is not simply a function of what a school principal or any other individual leader does, it is regarded as a function of all the stakeholders in the school and community. The principal’s role as an instructional leader is thus exercised ‘with’ others not ‘over’ others (Gandebo, 2007: 9).

On the other hand, Hopkins (2001) contends that research in educational leadership reveals that those schools that function as effective teaching and learning communities are successful as a result of increasing/improving students’ academic achievement. Moreover, Leverett (2002) as quoted by Gandebo (2007: 9) argues that leadership that embraces collective effort promotes a shared sense of purpose and mission.

2.2 Theoretical approaches of leadership

According to Christie and Lingard (2001) there are many contributing factors to successful leadership in schools. However, there are also a range of factors which negatively affect learner achievement. This literature review uncovered/revealed some of the tested theories that may yield positive results, even under challenging circumstances, if applied correctly in

any context. The conceptual framework used in this literature is carefully selected to match the research problem that focuses on the role of the principal as an instructional leader in improving learner achievement in township primary schools of South Africa (Bush, 2007).

Research in the urban township schools indicated that the challenges of the majority of schools in South Africa started after the Soweto uprisings in 1976. The post-apartheid responsibility of the African National Congress as the ruling party from 1994 was to restore law and order, especially now that poverty, crime, rape, violence, substance abuse became rife in the townships and spilled over into schools. According to research a large number of dysfunctional schools struggled with issues of infrastructure, social ills, low morale of teachers and lack of support and/or poor communication/relations with the Department of Education. However, there are other schools that have managed to function successfully under such adverse conditions. These successful schools were then called 'resilient schools' due to their resilience under such challenging circumstances (Christie and Lingard, 2001).

In line with this concept 'resilient schools' remained orderly and managed to operate independently under difficult circumstances. Research indicates that those schools collaborated with local communities, in some cases with little/limited support from government. They relied more on their effective and efficient leadership styles and management approaches.

Another study that was conducted in successful schools of Denmark found a pattern of successful leadership that emanates from communication amongst stakeholders and community building initiatives (Moos, et al., 2005). Two major approaches of the same study indicated that the following values were developed or inculcated in learners of Danish schools to enforce discipline: respect, tolerance, responsibility, curiosity and active participation, experience, happiness and self-esteem, professionalism and competence. Democratic principles such as shared leadership and transparency, based on trust and amongst staff members made people act freely during decision-making processes as part of the execution of their duties (Moos, et al., 2005).

A case study conducted in Cyprus focusing on successful school leadership in a rural context identified personal qualities and professional competencies as common contributing factors to effective school leaders. Secondly, these leaders' effective leadership styles in diverse

cultural contexts also account for this success. Moreover, the vital elements found to be contributing to the success of those schools were: people-centred leadership, clearly communicated values and visions, strong emphasis on the promotion of learning, the use of networked leadership and the creative management of competing values (Pashiardis, et al., 2011).

Research conducted in six international countries, namely: Australia, Denmark, England, Norway, Sweden and USA by Moos and Johansson (2003) shows how success was sustained by six successful school principals for more than 5 years in their respective schools. However, what is clear in this study of School Principal project is that schools are unique and as such they use different leadership approaches to achieve their goals and realize their vision.

Furthermore, the same study revealed that the principals sustained their success through dedication, sacrifice, sharing common vision, communication, trust and respect amongst leaders and their subordinates, pressure and support, strong bureaucratic structures in some instances, freedom given to teachers to run with curriculum programme under the supervision of their experienced colleagues or principals, collaboration amongst all stakeholders, maintaining good working relations, distributed leadership and accountability (Moos, 2003; Firestone and Shipps, 2005; Mc Kenzie, et al., 2008).

In addition, Bush (2007) illustrates the significance of the role of a principal in raising educational standards and closing the gap in learner achievement. He used one of his theories that depict a principal as an instructional leader. This theory promotes teaching and learning as the core business of the day at any institution. Therefore, according to this theory all school activities should be centred on promoting effective teaching and learning. The emphasis and main focus of instructional leadership is on effective teaching and learning, and professional development of teachers and the growth of learners in different aspects. On one hand, Spillane (2001) looks at distributed leadership as a sharing of responsibilities amongst multiple leaders or people. On the other hand, he makes a clear distinction that says 'distributed leadership' is not the same as 'shared' or 'team leadership', though there may be elements of shared and team leadership within this leadership

approach. He emphasises the fact that distributed leadership may either be autocratic or democratic.

According to Piontek, et al. (1998) children from low income families do not, on average, overcome the hurdle of lower initial attainment. It appears that the social class to which learners belong is a powerful determinant and indicator of subsequent educational achievement (Gray, 2001: 1) as quoted by Harris (2009). Maden (2001) as quoted by Harris (2009) proposes that teachers must exceed their normal efforts in order to achieve and sustain improvement in such challenging contexts. Research shows that the quality of leadership is a major contributor to the improvement of student performance and achievement (Reynolds, et al., 2001 and Hopkins, 2001) as quoted by Harris (2009). This research indicates that the quality of leadership of schools in poor communities is one of the major levers for subsequent success and achievement (Harris, et al., 2006).

I agree that this success depends to a large extent on the active involvement of all major role players or stakeholders like: leaders/managers, educators, parents, students, school community and the Department of Education. Indeed, the distributed leadership approach creates an opportunity to engage the key stakeholders in order to succeed in realizing the shared/common vision (Harris, et al., 2006).

The study by Prew (2007) revealed that the successful principals in South African township schools are those who have followed in the footsteps and leadership styles of our former South African presidents in the new era of South African politics, that is, President Rolihlahla Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki. These leadership styles included but were not limited to inclusive, participatory, democratic and distributed approaches. On the other hand, the same study showed that the unsuccessful principals used the P.W Botha's leadership style which was embedded and aligned to South African apartheid era policies. P.W Botha was the symbol of apartheid as the former president of South Africa who represented the minority rule of White people, during the apartheid era. His style of leadership had elements of authoritarianism and tended to be militaristic, hierarchical, centralized, rules driven and secretive (Prew, 2007).

2.3. Definitions of key terms, concepts and variables

2.3.1 Participative leadership

Participative leadership assumes that the decision-making process of the group ought to be the central focus of the group (Leithwood, et al., 1999: 12) as quoted by Bush (2007). Leithwood, (et al., 1999: 12) explains that this model is underpinned by three assumptions:

- Participation will increase school effectiveness,
- Participation is justified by democratic principles, and
- In the context of site-based management, leadership is potentially available in any legitimate stakeholder.
- On the other hand, Sergiovanni (1984: 13) posits that participative approach will succeed in 'bonding' staff together and in easing pressures on school principals.

I agree with the notion which says the participative model is consistent with the democratic values of the new South Africa. Furthermore, I support the view that says "the burdens of leadership will be less if leadership roles and functions are shared." I also agree that the introduction of SGBs for all the schools in South Africa, and greater prominence should be given to SMTs which in turn suggests a firm commitment to participative decision making (Bush, 2007).

However, there is a gap in the development of School Management Teams in South African schools in order to create the potential for participative leadership, but there is very little evidence to suggest that participative leadership is supplanting or even supplementing the principal's singular leadership (Bush, 2007).

2.3.2 Instructional leadership

Bush and Glover (2002: 10) argue that instructional leadership focuses on teaching and learning, and Glover (2002) claims that instructional leadership is strongly concerned with teaching and learning, including professional learning of teachers, as well as student growth. According to Bush and Glover (2006: 27):

Instructional leadership focuses on teaching and learning, and on behaviour of teachers in working with students. In this case, leaders' influence is targeted at student learning via teachers. Moreover, the emphasis is on the direction and impact of influence rather than the influence process itself.

There is general consensus amongst scholars and policy-makers that instructional leadership is part of the school principal's leadership responsibility (Gandeebo, 2007: 10). The author agrees with this argument when Gandeebo says school leaders are weighed down with accountability and administrative endeavours to an extent that they hardly have time to monitor what is taking place in classrooms.

Furthermore, Gandeebo (2007: 13) suggests that the primary understanding of instructional leadership relates to the teaching and learning process within the classroom. Although most scholars allude to the fact that the concept relates to the processes involved in the delivery of the curriculum, there seems to be no consensus regarding its definition. Hence the different perspectives from different scholars and researchers in the field. Gandeebo (2007) contends that instructional leadership is a framework by which school leaders provide direction, resources and support to educators and learners, with the objective of bringing about improvement in teaching and learning in the school environment. Foriska (1994) as cited by Gandeebo (2007:15) perceives instructional leadership as critical to the development and maintenance of an effective school. He goes on to suggest that to be effective the focus should be on student achievement, as such the focus of principals and SMT members should be on supplying teachers with the appropriate resources which keep their attention on student's learning. Quinn (2002), as cited by Gandeebo (2007: 15) also emphasises the SMT's role as instructional leaders, which is the ability to motivate and inspire teachers.

Heck (et al., 1990) identified the behaviour of instructional leadership as setting the climate or high expectations for academic and social behaviour. For them, the focus of instructional leaders is the development of instructional goals consistent with school goals and supervising how instructional strategies are transformed into learning activities through direct instruction. Waters (et al., 2003) as cited by Gandeebo (2007: 16) suggests that curriculum, instruction and assessment are instructional functions which require the direct involvement of the school instructional leader in the design and implementation of curriculum, instruction and assessment practices.

In addition, Hallinger and Murphy (1987: 2) as cited by Gandeebo (2007: 18) argue that instructional leaders are expected to monitor student progress by meeting and discussing

with teachers curriculum issues, to help identify weak students and help advise on strategies and solutions for assisting needy students. Furthermore, the SMT monitors teachers' work during classroom observations or visits where they scrutinise files and learner books with the main purpose of giving support and constructive feedback (Employment of Educators Act of 1998).

I propose that instructional leadership should set the tone at school level since it focuses on the core business of schooling. I also suggest that all other activities, including the vision and mission of the institution should revolve around teaching and learning due to the significance of this leadership style.

2.3.3 Democratic leadership

Democratic leadership allows the involvement of different stakeholders in the decision making process (Ngcobo and Tikly, 2010). A typical example of this leadership style is applied in our South African governance system and politics, under the new South African Constitution of 1996. According to the South African Constitution, we there is a representative democracy and a participatory democracy. The latter type of democracy allows all stakeholders to make direct input or participate directly in the decision making process. However, the former type of democracy allows representatives of their constituency to take decisions on their behalf, as they are mandated to do so by virtue of them being elected into those positions by their constituency.

The current climate in the South African politics is in favour of democracy as opposed to an autocratic system. I also suggest that there should be a balance between distributive and democratic leadership styles due to the nature of their similarities and the potential to encourage mass and active participation in decision-making processes at school level. I believe decisions reached under these conditions will be owned by all stakeholders and will promote a common or shared vision. Ownership of a common vision also embraces the shortcomings or weaknesses of the team. There should be no room for blaming each other for our failure in a trial-and-error climate. We should all take responsibility for both our successes and failures without shifting blame, including the education of our children.

Under the distributive leadership, I think the non-negotiable like policy matters which require implementation at any given time, should not be confused with autocracy by the

manner in which they should be followed or adhered to. This will eliminate the possibility of falling into a *laissez faire* kind of leadership. Accountability is a fair expectation when it comes to compliance (Spillane, 2005).

2.3.4 Distributed leadership

Distributed leadership is about sharing responsibilities amongst multiple leaders or people (Spillane, 2001). However, Spillane alludes to the fact that this type of leadership can either be democratic or autocratic and is not the same as shared or team leadership or delegation. Spillane (2001) acknowledges that this type of leadership may have elements of shared or team leadership. Spillane (2005: 144) argues that distributed leadership is first and foremost about leadership practice rather than leaders or their roles, functions, routines and structures. Therefore, successful leaders' duties will include how to harness the actions of their teachers in trying to achieve the organisational goals. Moreover: "Leaders act in situations that are defined by others' actions" (Spillane, 2005: 145). He argues that from the perspective of distributed leadership, it is in these interactions that leadership practice is constructed. In this case, everyone's role is appreciated and supported. Likewise, in as much as followers need their leaders, leaders need their followers (Poopedi, 2011: 34).

2.3.5 Efficient leaders

Efficient leaders make a huge and positive impact in their institutions or organizations, with little resources and limited time at their disposal (Stoll, et al., 2006). There is general consensus that leaders are visionaries who are able to set direction for their schools or organisations. According to Harris and Chapman (2002), establishing shared vision and communicating a sense of direction is critical for leaders operating under difficult circumstances. I agree with their conclusion that a lack of common purpose (collaboration) may lead to underperformance by staff and learners in poverty-stricken communities. Daggett (2009: 2) suggests that having few or little resources is not a valid excuse for low performance or underperformance. The author maintains that schools can still attain high student performance with low cost in expenditure on resources. This is how resilient schools earned this title in South Africa and elsewhere in the world. According to Leithwood, et al. (1999) there is no final word on what is good leadership.

2.3.6 Effective schools

Effective schools are learning communities which embrace the culture of collaboration and collective responsibility for the development of effective teaching practices and improved student achievement (Department of Education Training, 2004b). I agree with the argument that says building a collaborative school culture, creating structures that encourage participation in decision-making and building productive relationships with parents and wider community, accounts for successful practices (Leithwood and Reihl, 2005).

Numerous research studies came up with largely common set of features for 'effective schools' and these are: strong leadership with a curriculum focus, clear goals and high expectations of staff and students, an emphasis on quality of teaching and learning, a supportive school environment, a culture of monitoring and evaluation, parental involvement and support (Christie, 2008: 181).

2.3.7 'Resilient schools'

These are schools that continue to function successfully in adverse or challenging circumstances. Vaillant (1993: 284) as quoted by Christie (2001) claims that resilience conveys both the capacity to be bent without breaking, and the capacity, once bent, to spring back. These may also be called successful or upwardly mobile schools in my view. The study conducted in South African schools shows that these 'resilient schools' did not rely solely on the support from external forces like the Department of Education for their success, though that support is necessary. Instead, it refers to the effective and efficient systems they employ at school level to achieve their educational goals. Another significant finding of 'resilient schools' was that there was either little or no parental involvement to an extent that even some School governing bodies were neither functional nor active. Some 'resilient schools' drew support from surrounding communities, although not always, such as from churches, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and/or tribal authorities (Christie and Lingard, 2001).

2.3.8 Human Rights and South African Constitution

The UN defines human rights as those rights which are inherent in our nature and without which we can live. In our South African context, these rights are enshrined within our South African Constitution and are guaranteed under the Bill of Rights. Amongst others, are the right to freedom of choice, religion, culture, association, the right to have access to

education, shelter, health care, justice system and also the right to protection from any form of abuse according to section 29 of the South African constitution of 1996.

2.4 Reflection on the South African school context

The South African scenario points to the existing gaps with regard to the preparation of new principals in South Africa in the area of leadership and management. Research conducted by Bush, et al.(2011) clearly indicate the need for our principals to undergo extensive training prior to their appointments in their respective schools. This strategy will ensure that it closes the gap created when appointing principals only on the basis of experience in the teaching field and minimum qualifications e.g Relative Education Qualification Value (REQV) 13 instead of managerial competence over and above the two minimum requirements. In some instances, political influence from union observers and gender bias towards males are determining factors of the outcomes of interviews in the South African context.

Moreover, cascading of information by Department of Education officials during workshops or two weeks training on average as it is the case in South Africa, is not sufficient for capacity building of principals, let alone the unrealistic expectation that content taught within such a short space of time will be effective in empowering leaders and their subordinates, through the same model.

The Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) programme that was introduced in six provinces of South Africa in 2007 is a good strategy that was intended to close the gaps (Bush, et al., 2011). The expectation from the Department of Education was that School Management Teams would improve the management and leadership of their schools through their effectiveness and efficiency after applying their knowledge and skills acquired during the two-year ACE training.

This determination by South African government to turn around our schools in a South African context was coupled with other intervention strategies geared towards improving how schools should be managed and governed. This was done through the introduction of the Advanced Certificate in Education in 2007 through six provinces of South Africa. This was an admission by South African government that School Management Teams including principals needed In-service Training in the following key areas:

- Understanding School Leadership and Management in the South African context;
- Managing Teaching and Learning;
- Leading and Managing People;
- Managing Organisational Systems, Physical and Financial Resources;
- Managing Policy, Planning, School Development and Governance.

The assumption was that if leaders and managers of schools are empowered with the relevant skills, SA schools can be managed better, learner outcomes will improve and teachers will be capacitated through their leaders and managers in order to be able to deliver according to the curriculum requirements (Bush, et al., 2011).

The main critique of this project was the selection process for the attendees of the training, and the lack of monitoring and support through mentoring, after the completion of the ACE training. Therefore, the extent of the success and impact of the ACE programme has not been sufficiently measured according to existing literature. Moreover, there is no guarantee or assurance that those who undergo such training will all be principals in future. But if they do not have the ACE qualification the gap at leadership and management level will remain.

What is clear though, is that there is a link between successful school leaders and improved learner performance. This suggests that to a large extent, the success of a school depends on the effectiveness and efficiency of its leadership and management. Therefore, the principal is the key driver of success, though he/she may not be able to compensate for social ills, like: poverty, crime, lack of sufficient resources, poor infrastructure, which may be beyond his/her control.

2.5 Summary of previous research studies

Bush (et al., 2009) maintains that the responsibility for managing teaching and learning is shared amongst the school principal, School Management Teams (SMTs), Heads of Departments (HODs) and educators. While educators manage curriculum implementation in the classrooms, HODs have the responsibility to ensure that there is effective teaching and learning across all subjects in all phases. School principals and School Management Teams, on the other hand, have a whole school to manage. However, in most cases, school

principals leave the monitoring of teaching and learning to subject Heads of Department (HODs) since they argue that they are preoccupied with other important administrative duties (Omal, 2011: 36).

However, Christie (1998) points to the pertinent challenges that South African schools are faced with, which led to the complete breakdown of the culture of learning and teaching to some schools. These schools were located in the poor and disrupted communities due to the struggle against apartheid in South Africa prior to 1994. Some of the challenges that they identified were: disputed and disrupted authority relations between principals, teachers and students; sporadic school attendance by students and teachers; poor school results; conflict and often violence in and around schools; vandalism, criminality, gangsterism, rape and substance abuse. School facilities were generally in a poor state of repair.

Over and above that, Christie (2010) paints a better picture about the political will of the current democratic government of South Africa to intervene by changing schools for the better. The government does this by systematically addressing some of the key challenges faced by our previously disadvantaged schools. Amongst other things, the Department of Education introduced the following policy “The South African Standard for Principalship: leading and managing South African Schools in the 21st Century.” The principal was identified as the leading professional, and effective leadership was viewed as critical to the achievement of transformational goals of the South African education system (Department of Education, 2005: 4).

In line with other research findings, Bush and Oduro (2006: 362) noted that throughout Africa, there is no formal requirement for principals to be trained as school managers prior to their appointments. They are appointed on the basis of having a successful record as teachers with the implicit assumption that this provides a sufficient starting point for school leadership. However, as Kitavi and Van der Westhuizen (1997: 252) note in respect of Kenya, “good teaching abilities are not necessarily an indication that the person appointed will be a capable educational manager.”

In the case of research conducted in Ghana, Oduro and MacBeath (2003), illuminate some of the tensions that arise amongst head-teachers (principals) who feel that it is unfair and

demeaning to expect them to teach children in class whilst they are supposed to supervise teachers as well. Some of the challenges are caused by other competing priorities that would require them to abandon lessons and leave learners either alone or with prefects to keep them occupied. However, they indicated in the research that when the children are left alone sometimes they become unruly, bully each other and fight in class.

In the South African context, Christie and Lingard (2001) have depicted how 'resilient schools' have overcome the challenges brought about by the legacy of apartheid, which led to a complete breakdown of the culture of learning and teaching to some schools, since the beginning of the Soweto uprisings in 1976. Therefore, my argument is that, we still have resilient schools in South Africa, which survived against all odds despite the challenges that they are faced with.

I concur with Bush (2007) when he claims that the quality of leadership makes a significant difference to school and student outcomes. Bush (2007) goes on to say in many parts of the world, including South Africa, there is recognition that schools require effective leaders and managers if they are to provide the best possible education for their learners.

It is against this background that I also suggest that Instructional Leadership in conjunction with other democratic leadership styles should be used as an appropriate model in schools in order to ensure that effective teaching and learning takes place in those schools. This, in my view, will probably increase accountability levels on the part of both leadership and teachers, despite the inevitable competing priorities alluded to above. Therefore, I believe the role of the principal as an Instructional Leader is vital for the success of the school.

I have realised that there is still a need to pursue research on resilient schools and with special focus on the role of the principals as instructional leaders in improving learner performance. There is still a gap and grey area in separating leadership and management as concepts. The draft policy framework on Education Management and Leadership Development (Department of Education, 2004) introduced the term 'leadership' alongside 'management,' and almost invariably used the two alongside each other without distinction.

Kotter (2001) makes a clear distinction between the terms 'management' and 'leadership'. He argues that management is about coping with complexity and goes further to say

without good management of enterprises there is chaos. In other words, management is about who does what, where, when, how and with what resources will you achieve the organisational goals. On the other hand, leadership is about coping with change. This calls for a leader to be a visionary with the ability to influence decision making and the direction that an organisation should take (Kotter, 2001).

I concur with Kotter (2001) when he maintains that there should be a balance between management and leadership, since they both complement each other. He contends that planning is part of management regardless of the period it takes to implement it because it promotes stability and a particular order. According to Kotter (2001) leadership creates a vision and the strategies used to realize that vision.

I suggest that a common ground should be reached on what 'leadership' is all about, and its clear distinction from 'management' should be articulated in no uncertain terms. Currently, the understanding and definition of these two terms is blurred as being similar but these have different meanings (Bush, 2007; Day, et al., 2001). One thing that is common in all the articulations from different writers and researchers is that both leadership and management are equally important and complement each other, let alone those who continue to use the two terms interchangeably (Department of Education, 2004).

2.6 Conclusion

I subscribe to the notion that says leaders are made but not born. Instructional leadership also require leaders to focus on teaching and learning as a core business of the day (Bush, 2007). I also support and agree with the assertion that says there is a close relationship between successful leadership and effective schools (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1996; National College for School Leadership, 2001; Bush, 2003) as cited by Bush and Oduro (2006). This literature reveals that principals are the key role players in the success of any school.

I also support the proposal that says principals should not only be appointed on the basis of being good teachers in their field of teaching and minimum qualifications (Bush and Oduro,

2006), but also on the basis of their competence or readiness based on sufficient training prior to appointment.

Lastly, from the review of the literature, I suggest that a combination of instructional leadership, distributed leadership, democratic leadership and team/shared leadership should be used as appropriate and effective approaches that will make a positive impact in raising educational standards and improving learner achievement in our schools.

This chapter explored the literature review of successful school leadership. The literature review covered issues relating to successful school practices of principal in challenging circumstances. It also gave clarity on conceptual/theoretical framework and meaning of key terms used in the previous research/studies. The next chapter will look at research methodology. In which the following will be explored: sampling, research methods or design, data sources/instruments, validity and reliability, ethical considerations and limitations of study.

CHAPTER 3: THE METHODOLOGY

3.1 Problem statement

According to ANA results in 2012, 2013 and 2014, the performance of our learners in South Africa is below international standards in Mathematics and Languages (Fleisch, 2008). The stark reality is that we are faced with the decline of learner performance in South African schools, especially in higher grades.

This gap is clearly visible in Grade 9 Maths results of ANA compared to Grade 1 results in the same subject and period, that is, over the past three years. In Languages, especially in the First Additional Languages (FAL), the trend is that a gap is also visible in both Grade 9 and Grade 1. This is the reason why I have decided to examine the leadership styles and management approaches which are used by successful but 'resilient schools' operating under adverse conditions in the townships of Soweto in South Africa. My focus is primarily on the role of the principal as an instructional leader to improve learner performance at primary school level.

3.2 Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative approach. This approach is useful in the sense that it enables the researcher to understand people's perceptions or opinions, behaviour, actions, attitude and values (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). The views of other researchers and/or authors were raised in order to support my argument. However, opposing views of researchers and different meanings attached to the same concepts have been mentioned in order to extend the scope of understanding of the discourse. The author has chosen an interpretive paradigm in this research.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

I used a variety of data collection methods, such as: interviews as primary sources based on semi-structured interviews, documentary analysis and observations of interactions between people, relations and operations of different stakeholders including the participants of this research. Thus, triangulation of the data was used to strengthen my report. Triangulation is

a multi-method strategy of data collection to ensure validity, reliability and credibility of research findings. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) refer to this method of validation as cross-validation of data.

3.3.1 Interviews

Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant. Semi-structured interviews allow for probing so as to elicit more valuable data. Short and narrative questions were asked during the interviews. The purpose of the interview was explained by the researcher prior to the commencement of the interview. Interviews are appropriate for this research because they allow participants to express their views explicitly and clearly on any matter raised during questioning. (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010).

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), interviews allow the interviewer to observe how participants or people feel about certain management approaches and leadership styles, even the manner in which they express their views. Unlike questionnaires that require a large sample of participants to respond to questions without an opportunity of having probing questions for more clarity. On the other hand the gestures, facial expression and confidence of participants or lack of it in the education system, and management or leadership of the school suggest valuable information about where participants attribute success in their institutions (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010).

For instance, if an interviewee is asked the following question: How do you ensure that your school succeeds in achieving high academic performance by learners? A possible response might be: We do our planning as teachers without the direct involvement of our principal, we set our own targets in each subject, we redesign our goals to keep ourselves on track and align our activities to our shared vision. We communicate and support each other and rely on intrinsic motivation for our own personal growth. We are self-motivated and take teaching as a priority every day (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010).

The manner in which the views were expressed was significant in my study in order to see what type of leadership styles and management approaches are used to make the school successful. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) claim that different types of interviews elicit

the following responses from participants depending on how they are structured: experience/behaviour, opinions/values, feelings, knowledge, sensory (how you see, hear, taste, touch and smell things in the world) and background/demographic.

Each participant was given questions prior to the interview so as to familiarise him or her with the expectations concerning the interview process. This ensured that enough time was given to the participants to prepare for the interviews, for instance, two weeks before the interviews was given to participants to collect all necessary documentation and to give as much details as possible to the questions. Audio recorder was used to record the interviews through the permission of the participants in order not to miss any detail. The participants were told that this exercise was for research purposes and information gathered would remain confidential and would be published with their consent. This preparedness ensured that effective and efficient data collection, and as such data interpretation is meaningful.

3.3.2 Document analysis

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) claim that personal documents like diaries, lesson plans and anecdotal records like notes on parents' development record of a child, log books or journals, describe an individual's actions, experiences and beliefs. Whereas official documents like minutes, memos, policies, reports, academic results, newsletters, etc. describe functions, values and how various people define their organisation in their views. These documents show the official chain of command and provide clues about the leadership styles and values according to McMillan and Schumacher (2010).

I requested the participants to provide me with the relevant documents for analysis purposes. For instance, the principal was asked to provide with the school profile, school development plan, school assessment plan, school academic results and analysis thereof, for the past two years, minutes of relevant committees and/or teams of the schools, et cetera. The district officials were asked to provide with the relevant departmental policies relating to school management and governance including but not limited to Annual National Assessment results for the past three years.

I argue that information that is obtained on paper is more reliable than what is said by word-of-mouth. My choice of 'resilient'/successful township primary schools is informed by high academic results in the Annual National Assessment in the past two years and the

research findings as articulated in the literature review. Therefore, the document analysis of ANA results and other relevant documents of the schools where the research took place made my findings reliable and valid.

I found coherence between what was said by the participants and what was documented. However, I must acknowledge here that sometimes data itself is not immune to manipulation and sometimes people may lie about their organisations or institutions so that they give the information that they perceive is needed, than what is actually happening at schools.

3.3.3 Observation

When an observer conducts an observation for whatever reason he or she looks at how participants in any activity including interviews, use gestures, facial expression, confidence or lack of it, to express their views or opinions on matters put on the table (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). Here the author used unstructured observation.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010) observation allows the observer to have an objective view about what is really happening on the ground, especially if the observation is done where the research is conducted. This brings about an opportunity to align what is said by the participants with what is happening on the ground. For instance, it might happen that participants associate success with strong leadership and disciplined staff, therefore, in that case, you expect to see teachers teaching during their periods and where teaching is taking place as planned and learning is happening as expected.

The fact that I was not the participant in the research itself, gave me an opportunity not to lose focus and be distracted from the key task of data collection through triangulation method. I contend that data collection was neither compromised nor manipulated by myself as a researcher.

The only serious challenge that I encountered in both schools and at district level, was the failure to secure appointments due to competing priorities which all participants were busy with in Term 3. For instance, unforeseen circumstances like unplanned meetings or workshops and ANA logistics were some of the serious challenges which made my

participants not to honour even the confirmed appointments which I made with them in advance. I would sometimes be turned away on my arrival at the research sites, for the same reasons as alluded to above.

The positive school culture was noticed in both schools during my observation. The true reflection of what was presented to me by participants during my research was matched with the outcomes of my observation of the situation and physical materials on the ground. For instance, when the participants claimed that there is harmony within the school and that they work collaboratively towards realising the common vision or achieving the organisational goals, I witnessed on several occasions this harmony and collaboration during my observation in both schools. Indeed teaching and learning have been the main focus of school activities from my arrival up until my departure.

Furthermore, working relations and work ethics as observed during my visits indicate that indeed team work, shared vision; emotional intelligence and positive school culture are some of the strategies used by these schools in their daily operations. The manner in which people communicate with each other and show respect for anyone they interact with, whether they know his/her status/position or background provided me with valuable data about how the school achieved its success/level of resilience. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) allude to the fact that field observation is an active process that includes observing and recording nonverbal cues like facial expressions, gestures, tone of voice, body language/movements and other non-verbalized social interactions that suggest the subtle or hidden meanings of interaction/communication.

Therefore, observation of operations, interactions and relations amongst stakeholders was noted within the school premises and outside the school boundaries. The manner in which the participants responded or reacted to questions or the research process was noted. McMillan and Schumacher (2010: 350) stated that “observation is a way for the researcher to see and hear what is occurring naturally in the research site”. They added that “it is the mainstay of qualitative research” (*ibid*). Through observation, I was able to gain insight into the existing practices of the successful school principals in the township.

As the researcher, my role in field observation was that of a non-participant-observer. I chose this form of observation instead of that of participant-observer, because it allowed me to closely document the participants in each school. The role of participant-observer might make the author lose focus from my data collection, or otherwise limit my objectivity in the field of observation (Hall, 2007). In my capacity as a non-participant observer, I did not offer any advice to the principal, deputy principal or heads of departments, neither did I participate in staff meeting. This was made clear to the participants before the beginning of interviews. I took field notes during and immediately after the observations, to record not only what I saw and heard, but I also reflected on what I saw (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010: 351). I spent about 3-5 days per week in each school so as to get a clear picture of what was taking place. However, I spent no more than 2 hours per day in each school in order not to interrupt the smooth running of the school.

3.4 Criteria for the selection of participants

Two schools and two participants from each of the following categories were chosen: two district officials, two principals, two School Management Team (SMT) members, two School Governing Body members (parents) whose children are registered at the school and two post-level one (PL1) educators from each school. This selection criterion was intended to draw conclusions about my research findings based on objective views that were articulated by a variety of participants.

3.4.1 The Principal

The principal plays a significant role as an instructional leader to improve learner performance (Bush, 2007). In this research, I wanted to find out to what extent does leadership and management account for the success of our schools. I used the theoretical framework of Bush (2007) which looks at the role of an instructional leader and the principal being the key player in this regard in managing teaching and learning. In addition, other theories or approaches that are employed in each institution were used as a lens to see what accounts for success at those schools.

3.4.2 School Management Team (SMT)

The effectiveness and efficiency of a school also depends to a large extent on the team work or collective effort by or collaboration with other stakeholders (Department of Education

and Training, 2004b). I looked at how the principal engages the SMT. For instance, I asked the principal of each school to choose two members of SMT. Therefore; it could either be one deputy principal and one head of department or two head of department (HODs), depending on the school organogram.

The author was interested in finding out whether and how the SMT views leadership and management's role as a significant/driver contributor to learner achievement. The author drew his conclusion on his findings while being conscious of the fact that other stakeholders might be loyal to the principal and tend to be bias in her/his favour due to an anticipated close working relationship.

3.4.3 The School Governing Body (SGB)

The role played by parents and the extent to which parents play that role in the development of an institution, and the nature of support they are expected to give to the school and principal in particular, cannot be ignored. According to South African Schools Act (84/1996), parents should play an active role in the school affairs of their children as governors of those institutions, regardless of their educational background.

Therefore, I was also interested to find out whether or not the principal engages them and in which way are they engaged if at all, whether they are active participants in the upliftment of educational standards in different aspects. The author has a view that says ordinary parents who were serving in the SGB or were having children attending school for the past two years at the same institution where research took place; have valuable information to share about the school leadership and management. The author was aware of the possibility that some of these parents might not know the difference between management and governance due to various reasons. However, what was important was to know their contribution to the success of the school and their views on a number of contributing factors to this success.

The author was aware that some parents might tell him what they perceived the author wanted to hear or might be honest and speak their minds or might decide to show allegiance to the principal due to an anticipated close working relationship with the school. Given all the possibilities, the author chose to rely on the principal to select the participants in the research using the same criteria as alluded to above. According to the Employment of

Educators Act (76/1998), as stipulated in the Personnel Administrative Measures for educators of South Africa, principals are expected to teach, monitor and support their subordinates at school level. In the same way, Institutional Development Support Officials (IDSOs) or the now called cluster leaders and subject advisers (district facilitators) are expected to support schools and principals in order to perform better. According to the Collective Agreement 8 of 2003, the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) in South Africa is meant to support educators and principals during the teaching and learning process and their development.

3.4.4. District Officials

Here one district official per school was interviewed. Preference was given to IDSOs due to the role they are expected to play in supporting their schools under their jurisdiction. They are supposed to know the strengths and weaknesses or challenges of their schools. They are the first line of communication or contact on matters that affect their subordinates at school level, that is, principals. The author relied on them to facilitate the process of getting relevant departmental documents for data collection and analysis thereof, as part of this research (Employment of Educators Act 76/1998).

However, when the author realised that only one IDSO was available, the curriculum unit at the district was requested to provide with the other official who was subsequently required to give data per consent, during the interviews, for the purpose of data collection and analysis thereof. A few questions were asked to the participating district officials about how the two schools make it happen under the adverse circumstances in Soweto. Two officials from the same district were interviewed in line with the participating schools under their jurisdiction.

Facilitators visit schools for monitoring, support and evaluation of teaching and learning. Their views on how the schools perform are significant and are likely to throw light on why other schools succeed with limited resources and little involvement by the district or no direct involvement of districts or limited support from districts. Research findings revealed that there were schools which were called 'resilient schools' because they succeeded under challenging circumstances due to purposive leadership and their central focus being on teaching and learning. They were having a sense of agency and responsibility; hence, they

managed to overcome their challenges. They were disciplined, flexible and consistent in their school culture and personal interactions (Christie and Lingard, 2001). My task was to establish whether there was a link between what the district officials attribute the success of these schools to and what the school management/leadership thinks.

3.5 Issues of Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity of my research largely depended on a number of views that other previous researchers alluded to, documents that were collected and the outcomes of my observation. I was aware that the principal might claim to be the only key driver of success whereas the research findings would uncover reliable data that would explain how schools succeed under difficult or challenging circumstances. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010) validity of qualitative designs is the degree to which the interpretations have mutual meanings between participants and the researcher. If data collected and research findings are reliable and valid, future researchers may use it for strengthening their arguments or disputing previous findings.

3.6 Sampling techniques

I used both purposive sampling and snowball sampling. The latter type of sampling is also called 'network sampling' (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010) because each successive participant is named by a preceding individual. In my research the principals were the first line of contact followed by school management team, teachers, parents and district officials. The former type of sampling is linked to the purpose or objectives of the research. For instance, we know that according to research learner achievement in South African schools is below international standards in the areas of Mathematics and Literacy or Languages (Fleisch, 2008).

However, I also intended to examine the strategies that successful principals employ in successful township primary schools, in order to raise academic achievement, even under challenging circumstances. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) contend that techniques help to justify choices made by researchers about the techniques which are used for sampling purposes. Therefore, the objectivity of views expressed by researchers or participants may be judged or measured on the basis of sampling techniques used. I suggest that this should be considered when measuring the margin for the error of analysis of research findings.

Table 1: Profile of Respondents

It is important to know the profile of the participants in order to make an objective conclusion of the findings, which represent the views of different levels of participants in terms of their positions/designations and constituency, from the lowest to the highest levels. In this way views expressed are likely to be objective, reliable and valid.

PARTICIPANTS	SCHOOL A	SCHOOL B
Principal	1	1
District Official	1	1
Head of Department	2	2
Educators	2	2
Parents	2	2
TOTAL	8	8

3.7 Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data was analysed inductively, that is, moving from specific data to general categories and patterns. Coding, categorizing and interpreting data to provide explanation of each phenomenon of interest will be part of qualitative analysis of data (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). I negotiated with the participants so as to return to the field of research, to seek additional data and validate emerging patterns. I agree with McMillan and Schumacher (2010) when they claim that making sense of data depends largely on the researcher's intellectual rigor and tolerance for tentativeness of interpretation until the analysis is completed. I further suggest that it is fair to interpret data when it has been analysed thoroughly.

3.8 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research allows for interaction with the participants through interviews and observation. It may happen with a small number of participants and within a reasonable

timeframe. It is reliable and valid. It also allows effective and efficient methods of data collection and analysis thereof (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). That is why I have chosen this type of data collection for my research.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

3.9.1 Confidentiality and anonymity

I took all the necessary precautions to ensure the confidentiality of data collected. My participants were coded in order not to compromise confidentiality or their privacy. The two schools were given different names so that they are not easily identifiable. Participants to the research were offered an opportunity to view the research report before it was finally released, for their inputs or comments in order to avoid any inconvenience or mismatch. It is very important to give guarantee to your participants about the confidentiality of data collected and their anonymity in order to gain their confidence. Moreover, this is a good and fair practice according to the code of ethical conduct (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010).

3.9.2 Informed consent

All the participants were assured about the confidentiality of data collected and their persons. They remained anonymous to the readers or audience or general public. The intention of the research report was made clear. Consent from all the participants was sort prior to the commencement of the research. Participants were allowed to choose convenient times and places for research to take place. No manipulation of data or insensitivity or insincerity was allowed from either researchers or participants.

This allowed the participants to be free and have confidence in the researcher and the entire process; hence there are no negative consequences for withdrawing from participating or for refusing to participate. It was made clear by the researcher right from the onset that this was a voluntary exercise for participants and would not affect any of their service conditions at work or anywhere. Therefore, any participant was allowed to withdraw from participating in this research for whatever reason at any time.

3.9.3 Limitations of the study

Merriam (2001) as quoted by Poopedi (2011: 58) argue that the limitations of the study involve issues of reliability, validity and generalizability. For instance, my study is based on two case studies of schools with few participants, that is, sixteen (16) in totals. The scope of

the study was limited mainly by time and accessibility. Moreover, the 3rd and 4th terms are the busiest due to formal assessments taking place nationally in South African schools. Other competing priorities led to postponements of appointments due to unforeseen circumstances and that state of affairs delayed the process of data collection.

It is important to know the limitations of the study in order to know the gaps which may require further research. Moreover, limitations allow us to consider the findings bearing in mind the inhibiting factors for extensive research. This also gives the researchers and other readers an opportunity to understand the underlying factors that may lead to generalisation of research findings or conclusion about the research being conducted (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010).

This chapter examined research methodology (that is, interviews, observation and document analysis), how sampling was done, identified criteria for selecting participants, ethical considerations and limitations of the study. In the next chapter, data will be presented and analysed.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF DATA

4.1 Introduction

Bokdan and Biklen (1982), as quoted by Simon (2011: 145), define qualitative data analysis as “working with data, organising it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesising it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others .”

This chapter focuses on the research findings of studies conducted at two public primary schools in two townships of Soweto in Gauteng Province of South Africa. Sources of data used were interviews, observation and document analysis. The study reveals how the two schools have succeeded under adverse conditions; hence, they are regarded as resilient schools, by the researcher.

4.2 Profile of School A

School A is situated in a township surrounded by informal settlements. It was built in 1980 and opened its doors to the learners and community at large in January 1981. The last four principals of School A, including the current principal, were all females. This suggests that leadership has nothing to do with gender. Therefore, you do not need to be a male in order to bring stability and order to an institution. The current principal has been serving in the teaching fraternity for forty years including 15 years as a principal in the same institution.

School A caters for Grade R–7 with an enrolment of 325 learners, 10 teaching staff and 3 non-teaching staff. Challenges of poverty, unemployment and other social-ills like crime, drug/alcohol abuse, teenage pregnancy, etc., are common in the school community. School A is not immune to such challenges. All the children who attend school here, including their parents and staff members are Black. There are two HODs who are responsible for Foundation Phase, Intermediate and Senior Phase respectively. The school does not qualify for the post of a Deputy Principal due to the post establishment which is determined by the Department of Education on the basis of learner enrolment.

4.3 Capacity building

According to Jacobson (et al., 2005: 613), as quoted by Poopedi (2011: 42), the principal is expected to develop, influence and support staff and students constantly in order to attain organisational goals.

When Principal 1 of School A was asked about how she understands and maintains her role as a principal, she replied by saying:

A principal is a leader who leads through empowerment. She/he gives information to his/her subordinates. She or he acquires resources for her or his institution. She or he should be accountable. A principal must make strategic plans, stimulate and inspire people around her or him. When there is crisis you must suggest possible solutions to the crisis and strive for success at all times. You must understand the weaknesses and strengths of each individual that you work or interact with in a school environment.

Both HOD 1 and HOD 2 in School A agreed that they are capacitated by GDE in a form of workshops and regular meetings. Teacher 2 also acknowledged the support they receive from the Department of Education and other Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) mandated by GDE to empower and support schools, though she has some serious reservations about the expertise and pedagogy of those NGOs. Educator 1 gave credit to her principal and HODs for her personal development and empowerment.

4.4 Professional development

According to SACE Act 31/2000 Continuous Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) is an obligation of each educator including principals, deputy principals and HODs (Heads of Department). The Collective Agreement on Resolution (8 of 2003) binds the employer (Department of Education) and the employees/teacher unions to take part in Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) processes. IQMS brings together Developmental Appraisal, Performance Measurement and Whole School Development with all 9 focus areas in mind for developmental purposes. One of the seven roles of an educator is that you are a lifelong learner and researcher (Employment of Educators Act 76/1998; South African

Council of Educators Act of 2000). When the principal in School A was asked what her thinking around professional development is, she said:

Professional development helps teachers to focus on their teaching in order to achieve maximum benefit and improve themselves. We need to grow teachers' skills, knowledge, commitment and service. When SACE brings programmes to us, teachers' participation will be fruitful because they gain knowledge and skills through external workshops and teacher based training

When HOD 1 was asked a similar question that deals directly with her contribution to curriculum development and whether staff members value her input in staff development, she replied by saying:

We hold meetings at school level and deal with challenges faced by teachers. We have formed a Professional Learning Group at school. We talk about classroom management. I personally feel my input is valued by my colleagues though some of them are sceptical about applying my new ideas. Other staff members are comfortable with the old style of doing things.

HOD 2 alluded to the fact that the SMT conducts workshops for staff members and deals with challenges faced by educators according to their areas of needs, as per the School Improvement Plan. When asked the same question that was posed to his peer he said:

We have an induction policy that we implement for new educators in order to make their lives easier. I distribute the management plan from GDE to all educators and remind them about subject meetings and other requirements, through my notice book.

Educator 1 responded to the same question in the following manner:

I run a school library. I encourage learners to read hence I have started a book club at my school. Some of the activities that we do at school are Spellathon, Bookworm and skirmish where we promote effectiveness and speed in spelling words. We compete with other schools in reading activities from Grade R to Grade 7. I also give advice in Maths. Yes teachers value my input due to my vast experience. I have taught in the

former Model C School. I am sharing good practice and I am moving with times. My colleagues take time to understand though.

When Educator 2 was asked the same question she said:

I make contributions towards curriculum development by following the policies in order not to divert from what is expected of us by the Department of Education. I collect information from other people including Non-Governmental Organisations. Absolutely, yes they value my input because they always give it a try.

It is clear that all the participants are actively involved in curriculum development and as such respect each other input.

4.5 Leadership Styles and Management Approaches

Spillane (2001) contends that distributive leadership is about sharing responsibilities amongst multiple leaders and their followers. Bush and Glover (2002: 10) argue that instructional leadership focuses mainly on teaching and learning. Stoll (et al., 2006) claims that Professional Learning Communities (PLC) refer to a group of people sharing and critically interrogating or reflecting on their practice on an ongoing basis. Ngcobo and Tinkly (2010) concede that democratic leadership allows for involvement of different stakeholders in decision-making process. Bush (2007) states that participative leadership is consistent with democratic values of the new South Africa since it assumes that the decision making processes of the group ought to be the central focus of the group (Leithwood, et al. 1999: 12).

Principal 1 in School A was asked how she would describe her leadership style and the core practices of the school, she replied at length by saying:

I use an inclusive approach of different leaders who are goal oriented and share with them the same vision. We are guided by our vision, mission, and policies like SASA of 1996, the South African Constitution (of 1996), etc. and human resources at our disposal. I use my authority to give direction. The core practices of the school are teaching and learning. An organisation is also important because it promotes collaboration between the team and individuals. A combined effort makes it easy to

reach the goals. I therefore rely on control and monitoring measures that the school has decided upon. Everyone must abide by the systems and structures that are in place. I use delegation to extend activities to more people, as part of empowerment. I believe this approach motivates and boosts high morale in the school.

4.6 Learner Performance and Strategic Interventions

When the same principal of School A was asked how she has managed to improve learner performance she said:

The Minister of Education said we should strive to be winning schools. It has been discovered that our learners cannot read, write or spell. We therefore inculcate the love for reading through Readathon and for spelling we have Spellathon, where we introduce phonics in Grade 4, 5 and 6 on a weekly basis, so that they are integrated in language lessons. As a school we intend to improve literacy and inspire learners to have a culture of reading and writing. We constantly review results and check or analyse results where learners performed poorly.

We attend to challenges that both educators and learners have during assessments. We encourage educators to attend workshops and exhibitions conducted by different distributors, for comparison purposes or quality benchmarking. We use learner profiles in the next grade to identify the weaknesses that each child had in the previous class.

This clear articulation of the facts regarding the contribution of Principal 1 in School A shows very clearly that she understands her role as a principal hence it is not surprising to see this significant improvement in learner performance at her school. On the other hand, Principal 2 of School B shows little experience though significant contribution is noted when asked the same question. For instance, she puts more emphasis on involving different key stakeholders in improving learner performance. That is not bad at all but rather limiting. Research shows that collaboration with key stakeholders is having a positive impact on the outcomes and objectives of an organisation (Ngcobo and Tikly, 2010).

4.7 Promotion of a Positive School Culture of Learning

When other participants were asked what leadership styles they think the principal adopts they replied:

Educator 1 said:

Our principal uses both democratic and autocratic leadership styles.

HOD 1 said:

The principal uses delegation.

HOD 2 said:

She uses democratic and laissez faire when dealing with the experienced staff members.

All of the participants acknowledged that they are always consulted on issues of common interest, for the purpose of decision making and to make their inputs known.

In a nutshell, the parents who were the participants have no reservations about how they are being serviced and valued at school by both the staff and management. They are actively involved in school matters. They conceded that their children are also happy to be in School A. Parents believed that there is a high quality of education being offered to their children in School A and they appreciated the fact that they are being guided and supported at this school when doing the children are doing school work.

4.8 Dealing with challenges

When Principal 1 was asked whether challenges of any nature are handled professionally and effectively either at school level or departmental level, this was her response:

At school level, challenges are handled professionally. We understand the legal implications of our actions. We strive to have conflict resolution tactics, to resolve issues amicably. We involve Unions to advise members and the management team whenever we face challenges. At district level sometimes relevant feedback is not

received by the school on time. We expect the district to be the conflict mediators at the right time but their availability leaves much to be desired. The lack of sufficient financial support and physical resources from the district or Department of Education, affects the school negatively e.g.: furniture like desks and chairs are not provided on time as required. The district office is failing to provide furniture on time. The budget for this function is not available at the school.

The principal also indicated that the implication of the lack of sufficient support is very serious. She said:

If there are insufficient resources during examination and teaching time, curriculum delivery and discipline in the classroom is negatively affected. Learners are not seated in a proper manner in the classrooms. I believe that the basic requirement which is the creation of a conducive atmosphere for teaching and learning to take place is being compromised.

These sentiments were echoed by Educator 1 who said at length:

We had a burglary at our school whereby our computers, fax machine, photocopier and other important items were stolen during that criminal activity. We were promised by the district that our photocopier and other important items will be replaced by the Department of Education, but that did not materialize. As a result, progress at our school is negatively affected. The outcome is that we incur costs by utilizing the services of the internet café, for purposes of photocopying and faxing. ANA question papers and other documents need to be printed and photocopied before the teaching of lessons and examination.

Our SASAMS is not functioning as a result of the burglary. GPLMS tasks including schedules and report cards need to be printed and this delays curriculum delivery. Our small budget is crippled further and that affects the effectiveness of our school. However, at school level challenges are handled professionally and effectively. The burglary was reported to the police and district. Procedure was followed. For instance, the child who falsely accused the teacher was discovered, and it was

established that her allegations were unfounded and the matter was handled effectively.

HOD 1 also alluded to the fact that conflicts are handled internally and the district is used as a last resort but never used for this. She went further to say:

The due process of the law takes place and constructive efforts to resolve conflict are made.

Educator 2 also agreed that challenges are dealt with professionally and effectively. However, she also had a serious reservation about the expertise of some of the NGOs that are sent by the Department of Education, to assist schools with curriculum issues e.g. the manner in which GPLMS expectations are tabled. She feels very strongly that some of the coaches lack the appropriate skills to offer assistance. She prefers to be left alone in order to use her professional judgement and competence with regard to pedagogy and curriculum pace setters including promotional requirements, that would give room for flexibility in applying those requirements in class. She said she wishes that she should not be forced to follow the national curriculum guidelines to the letter and promote learners to the next grade or class even if they are not yet ready, due to the National Protocol of Assessment for Grade R to 12.

However, both District Official 1 and 2 did not accept the blame for slow delivery of services and goods to schools and when they were asked the nature and form of support that they give to schools, this is what they said:

We provide teacher development programmes in the form of workshops, meetings and one on one school visits depending on the needs of each school.

District Official 2 elaborated on the same question by adding that:

Schools are grouped into clusters and subject advisers respond to their common needs per cluster throughout the year. Different units of the district give different kinds of support as required by schools e.g.: LTSM, Finance, Curriculum, Governance units, etc.

The concerns raised by the Principal 1 and Educator 1 of School A do not discourage them in their determination to succeed hence their performance as a school. The collaboration amongst staff members as alluded to by the participants is a clear indication that the school earned the name of being called 'resilient school'.

4.8.1 Document analysis for School A: post establishment

The current post establishment in 2014 in terms of gender representation reflects that the majority of educators including the SMT are females with the exception of one HOD and one Post Level 1 educator. Altogether we have 10 teaching staff and 2 non-teaching staff. The 10 teaching staff consists of 1 principal, 2 HODs and 7 Post Level 1 educators. The non-teaching staff consists of 1 female Administrative Assistant and 1 General Assistant who is a male.

TABLE 3: PRINCIPAL AND EDUCATORS' PROFILES

PARTICIPANT	AGE	GENDER	HIGHEST QUALIFICATIONS	TEACHING EXPERIENCE (YEARS)
PRINCIPAL	59 yrs	F	B ED (HONS)	40 yrs
HOD 1	55 yrs	F	JPTD	13 yrs
HOD 2	51 yrs	M	B ED (HONS)	28 yrs
EDUCATOR 1	55 yrs	F	SPTD	11 yrs
EDUCATOR 2	59 yrs	F	ACE	36 yrs

TABLE 4: ANA RESULTS FOR SCHOOL A

SUBJECTS	GRADES	SCHOOL AVERAGE	YEARS
a. Language	1	60%	2012
b. Mathematics	1	61%	2012
c. IsiXhosa (HL)	1	63%	2013
d. Mathematics	1	64%	2013
e. IsiXhosa (HL)	1	63%	2014
f. Mathematics	1	71%	2014
g. Language	2	60%	2012

h. Mathematics	2	61%	2012
i. IsiXhosa (HL)	2	80%	2013
j. Maths (HL)	2	65%	2013
k. IsiXhosa (HL)	2	79%	2014
l. Maths (HL)	2	77%	2014
m. Language	3	60%	2012
n. Mathematics	3	61%	2012
o. IsiXhosa (HL)	3	56%	2013
p. Maths (HL)	3	67%	2013
q. IsiXhosa (HL)	3	73%	2014
r. Maths (HL)	3	74%	2014
s. Language	4	60%	2012
t. Mathematics	4	61%	2012
u. English (FAL)	4	62%	2013
v. Maths (FAL)	4	63%	2013
w. English (FAL)	4	58%	2014
x. Maths	4	57%	2014
1. Language	5	60%	2012
2. Mathematics	5	61%	2012
3. English (FAL)	5	56%	2013
4. Maths (FAL)	5	64%	2013
5. English (FAL)	5	72%	2014
6. Maths (FAL)	5	62%	2014
(i) Language	6	60%	2012
(ii) Maths	6	61%	2012
(iii) English (FAL)	6	66%	2013
(iv) Maths (FAL)	6	37%	2013
(v) English (FAL)	6	73%	2014
(vi) Maths (FAL)	6	58%	2014

4.8.2 Observation in School A

During my study in School A, I was a non-participant observer because my participation could have distracted my attention. This could have led to me not doing justice to the data collection and the research process could have been compromised. It would have tempted me to be biased and influence other participants to give subjective views in my favour, due to possible manipulation of evidence presented by participants. This could have compromised the validity and reliability/credibility of the research findings themselves.

I have observed during my two-day visits per week in School A how leadership and management interacts with the school community, GDE officials, visitors, children and their colleagues. I personally got a sense of the peace and harmony that existed as part of the school culture. I observed that everybody is treated with respect; served; taken care of; and all stakeholders seemed to be having a sense of belonging due to the manner in which they engage with school management and staff. This was confirmed by the views that all participants, including parents, have about the treatment they receive from the school and their engagement with the school matters.

Teachers were seen in class teaching and learners were not loitering around aimlessly during school hours. Discipline of learners was evident by the manner in which they relate to one another, their teachers and other people in and around the school. I have not witnessed a case where I heard vulgar language used by either the teachers or their learners during my presence in the school. I have not seen graffiti on the walls nor did I see a dilapidated building that poses serious safety or security risk to the occupants of that building.

Instead, I saw the renovation of school grounds and the soccer field as the result of the efforts of one educator participant who was confident that she is in the forefront of this project, that is, to turn the school around. This Educator 1 claimed that it is through her efforts that funding from the National Lottery Board in South Africa was secured for her school to build a multi-purpose field for Netball, Volleyball and other sporting codes, for the benefit of the learners and school community.

Children were seen playing on the jungle gym during break time and there were teachers taking care of them for their safety and as part of their ground duties. I also observed that there is a food garden which is well looked after and maintained by volunteers from the school community, in collaboration with Educator 2, the school management and SGB.

However, though my observation gave me a very positive side, three participants of my study, that is, educator 1 and 2 including principal 1 raised serious concerns about the lack of sufficient support from the district pertaining to challenges they experience, which require outside intervention. For instance, when a question was asked about whether challenges of any nature are dealt with professionally and effectively either at school level or departmental level, this is what they said:

We think that the Department of Education is not responding quickly enough and to our complete satisfaction when it comes to our needs. We experienced burglary in the past and we lost a photocopier with other valuable items which assist us in the smooth running of the school such as ANA, internal examination/tests, e.t.c. We do not have a photocopier to print papers for this purpose. We do not have sufficient funds which will enable us to always use external service providers like the internet café, for printing and communication purposes.

The district takes too long to intervene on matters that need their intervention and this situation retards progress in one way or the other. As such service delivery and curriculum delivery is negatively affected by this state of affairs.

Principal 1 indicated that the lack of furniture like chairs and desks for learners adversely affects the proper atmosphere for teaching and learning to take place. According to her, this affects the issue of learner discipline due to learners not being seated in a proper manner in the classrooms. She mentioned that there is no budget at school to close this gap of school furniture and this has serious implications on curriculum delivery. She commented the involvement of union representatives during dispute resolution processes, and alluded to the fact that internal challenges are handled professionally and amicably.

4.9 Profile of School B

School B was officially opened in 1974 and HOD 2 was part of the school opening and has 41 years of experience in the same school. The school is led by a female principal who took over from her female predecessor in 2013. The current incumbent who is a principal is 49 years old. She joined the school in 1995 as a Post Level 1 Educator and was promoted to Post Level 2 as the HOD in 2010.

School B is situated in a Soweto Township in Gauteng Province with a current enrolment of 454 learners and 13 permanent teaching staff members and 3 non-teaching staff (2 General Assistant & 1 Administration Assistant). This school is serving communities from historically-disadvantaged areas where unemployment, poverty, crime and other social-ills are the order of the day. Learners and teachers are all black. The pool of learners consists of those who come from informal settlements nearby and surrounding townships of Soweto.

The school starts from Grade R to Grade 7. The school has 1 principal, 2 HODs and 9 Post Level 1 educators. School B does not have a Deputy Principal due to the low learner enrolment.

4.10 Capacity building

According to the South African Standard for Principalship: leading and managing South African Schools in the 21st century (Department of Education, 2005), six key standards were identified, these were leading and managing the learning school; shaping the direction and development of the school; assuring quality and securing accountability; developing and empowering self and others; managing the school as an organisation; and work with and for the community.

The national Department of Education initiated its own Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) in Educational Leadership as part of capacity building or empowerment to School Management Teams, through tertiary institutions of South Africa, from 2007 across six provinces at that time (Bush, et al., 2011).

When Principal 2 in School B was asked whether she feels that empowering teachers is important in her school, she responded by saying: *“Yes, it plays an important role in the sense that you give teachers opportunities to show their capabilities. During the process of empowering them you realise that each individual is unique. For instance, we held our staff development workshop on the 05 August 2014 where we were sharing good practice amongst teachers from Foundation Phase to Intersen Phases. This created an opportunity to do SWOT analysis where we also did our own introspection in relation to our weaknesses and strengths so as to inform our strategic objectives in order to forge a way forward.*

We value each other’s input and roles. One of the major recommendations that we all made was that we need a budget for these kinds of empowerment workshops and other relevant stakeholders should also come on board, for the purpose of team building.

When the participants were asked whether they feel they were given guidance in leadership, this is what they said:

Yes, we get guidance from both our principal and the department of education, through workshops and meetings.

Educator 1 said:

Yes, there is guidance from the department through the IDSO. I help the principal and HODs due to my experience. I know many things that I share with them. If I encounter any challenge I consult with the IDSO.

Educator 2 responded by saying:

Yes, we have a great principal who understands. We follow in her footsteps through accountability to Government. We understand shared leadership and the limits of how far you can go. The SMT and the principal are supportive.

Therefore, according to the participants of School B they acknowledge the significance of being empowered either at school level or by the Department of Education. Indeed, for any team to be effective you need to capacitate that team.

4.11 Professional development

Stoll (et al., 2006) argues that capacity building for the purpose of sustainable school improvement can be achieved if there are concerted efforts to develop Professional Learning Communities. Therefore, the success of this development depends on the involvement of individuals, groups and whole school communities. Capacity building involves motivation, skills, positive learning, organisational conditions and culture, and infrastructure of support.

Although there is acknowledgement by authors that there is no single universal meaning or definition of Professional Learning Communities (PLC), Stoll (et al., 2006) maintains that PLC refers to a group of people sharing and critically interrogating or critically reflecting on their practice on an ongoing basis and is informed by the reflective, collaborative, inclusive, learning-oriented and growth-promoting way.

In addition, Louis (et al., 1995) claims that Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) refer to mutually supportive relationship and developing shared norms and values. They further argue that professionals and professionalism refer to the acquisition of knowledge and skills, orientation to clients and professional autonomy.

Principal 2 in School B was asked about her understanding or thinking around professional development and her role or involvement on curriculum issues of the school and her responses were the following:

Professional development requires all stakeholders to be actively involved in different roles and responsibilities. For instance there are those who are dealing with finances, that is, a finance committee as mandated by SGB. There are those who support both teachers and learners on various aspects or areas of needs e.g. Department of Education and SMT. There are those who support learners with social challenges e.g.: social workers. We have teachers who have a contractual obligation to be in class on time and conduct lessons. Learners who are needy are given uniform by the Department of Social Development and those with skin problems are taken to hospital for free, by our sponsors to receive treatment.

My role as a Principal is to encourage educators to give homework to learners, to attend classes daily, to control written work, to prepare and issue timetable based on classification (individual workload) for each educator. I expect all educators to execute their duties and go beyond their call of duty. I also take responsibility of encouraging learners to do their work.

Both HODs in School B were asked similar questions about how they contribute to curriculum development and whether their inputs in staff development are valued or not by staff. HOD 1 responded by saying:

I have done a lot. I invited the district officials to come to our school and workshop the Foundation Phase. We have done team building with staff. We discussed protocols to be followed and curriculum issues. We talked about how we should build good human relationships as colleagues without gossiping about each other.

During the team building workshop we came up with solutions to a variety of our daily challenges e.g.: the role of parents and reading by learners. We were sharing good practice and it was fruitful and everybody was involved. We also invited a district official to deal with issues of lesson planning and other curriculum issues. I can safely say as a Foundation Phase HOD I have a huge impact because I encourage others to work as a team in solving problems at school.

Yes, I feel teachers value my input during staff development. I don't have a problem.

HOD 2 was brief and straight to the point when asked the same questions as his peer and said:

We conduct meetings; invite people with the know-how on curriculum issues especially where there are difficulties, as part of curriculum development. On issues of my inputs, yes I feel that the teachers value them because after some development they give positive feedback. In a nutshell I can say they appreciate my inputs.

When asked the same questions Educator 1 said:

On curriculum development I feel all the changes in the Curriculum did not develop me. I will be happy only if learners are progressing. Today's education of learners is lowering learner performance. For instance there is no development for learners

under CAPS and OBE (Outcomes Based Education). The way we were taught in the past is different today. I recommend that the previous method of teaching should be used.

South Africa is performing badly in Maths compared to the world. In the past it was different. For instance 4 basic aspects/skills were emphasised, that is, 'Addition', 'Subtraction', 'Multiplication' and 'Division'. Each was drilled until the learners mastered all of them. Today the main focus is on 5 outcomes of Maths which are 'Patterns', 'Relationships', 'Measurement' and 'Data handling'. These are supposed to be taught in one week. We are taking things that failed in other countries to our own country, South Africa.

On the issue of inputs she said:

Yes, teachers value my inputs in staff development because they appreciate them due to my age and experience. They hold me in high regard. I assist the newly appointed and less experienced so that they don't fall into the previous trap. We used to sit in silos, gossip and fight in the past. I influenced teachers to meet in the staff-room during breaks. We now share jokes and are free to relate with each other. I pray to God to keep this harmony amongst us.

Educator 2 said the following about curriculum development:

We have established a connection between family and school to improve learner performance. We encourage parental involvement. Research results show that learners perform well if they are supported. We have Science and English extra classes/lessons on each Saturday. We engage learners in sporting activities and computer lessons. The skills that the youth acquire from these activities help them academically as well.

On the issue of his inputs in staff development, he said:

Teachers value my inputs very highly. We do many things together to promote academic excellence. We discuss learner performance improvement and how students learn. We critique government initiatives whenever these arise. We share the same views about our vision.

All of the participants in School B showed enthusiasm in professional development regardless of who the initiator is. They value each other's input in this regard.

4.12 Leadership styles and management approaches

Christie and Lingard (2001) make a clear distinction between leadership and management. They contend that leadership involves influence over others, and may take place outside, as well as inside of formal organisations. Management relates to structures and processes by which organisations meet their goals and central purposes, and arguably, is more likely to be tied up to formal positions than to persons.

In addition Kotter (1990) argues that managers promote stability in the organisation and good management brings order and consistency with regard to quality and profitability. On the other hand, leaders press for change and give direction through a shared vision. They use their power of influence to win team members who would buy into their vision.

However, there are a variety of leadership styles that a leader may choose from or against which leaders may be judged. There is general consensus amongst authors and researchers that we have both bad managers and good leaders or good managers and bad leaders. For instance, a good manager has systems in place to ensure that the implementation of organisational goals becomes successful e.g.: operational plan or management plan accompanied by relevant resources is required to make each plan a success. Bad managers do not plan; often take things as they come with no monitoring and accountability systems in place (Kotter, 2001; Bush, 2007; Bandur, 2012).

Bush (2007) makes a clear distinction between different management models and leadership models that any leader or manager may choose from or may be bench marked against. For instance he talks about formal, collegial, political, subjective, ambiguity and cultural management models. He also explains the meanings of managerial, participative, transformational, interpersonal, transactional, post-modern, contingency, moral and instructional leadership models.

Principal 2 in School B was asked how she would describe her leadership style and this is how she responded during my study:

A leader looks at strategic planning and the ability to influence others to execute their duties.

When other participants in School B were asked what leadership style do they think their principal adopts, this is what they said:

HOD 1 said:

Our principal partially uses authoritative style and partially democratic style. Sometimes she wants to push issues. She listens when you come to her and talk to her. We are trying to get there. She is easy to work with. She always comes to your level, to compromise when necessary.

HOD 2 said:

Our principal uses a democratic leadership style of management. All people are given a chance to speak their minds and initiate things needing to be attended to.

Educator 1 said:

Our principal is democratic because her office is open to everybody. She listens to people's ideas, good or bad. If it is not good she makes her point. If she is confronted for any mistake, she apologises.

Educator 2 said:

Our principal promotes shared leadership. She cannot separate us from her. She uses distributive leadership. Everybody is given a chance to grow.

It is clear that participants in School B are supportive of the democratic and distributive leadership styles that they claim their principal adopts when leading them. During my observation, as I was posing this question of leadership styles and management approaches, I got a sense that HOD 1 and Educator 1 were hesitant to give the principal total credit for good leadership styles and management approaches.

This was clear when Educator 1 gave herself credit instead of either SMT or the principal. Earlier on during the interview she claimed that she is the one who develops or assists the SMT due to her experience and if she is stuck with a problem she consults the IDSO for help instead of the principal. HOD 1 felt that the principal is pushing things to happen, hence,

labelling her as being partly autocratic and democratic. This reservation was even expressed through facial expression and gestures by the two participants.

4.13 Learner performance and strategic intervention

When Principal 2 was asked about how she has managed to improve learner performance, this was her response:

By engaging parents, inviting stakeholders with expertise in education to come and empower both our learners and educators. I encourage educators to do their work diligently. We ensure that our learner acclimatise with the school environment. We use a variety of resources, tools and techniques like CDs, textbooks, charts, exercise books, computers, reading books, etc. to inculcate the culture of teaching and learning. We ensure that there is Continuous Professional Teacher Development in line with the SACE requirements, so as to ensure that our educators match the demands of our education system.

This is a clear indication that there are a number of strategies employed by School B to improve learner performance. This also shows a team effort.

4.14 Promotion of a Positive School Culture of Learning

All the sentiments of a positive school environment or culture where there is discipline amongst staff and learners were echoed by both parents who were the participants in this study. They confirmed that they all work as a team at school and are always informed about school matters that affect them. They claimed that they are actively involved in the decision making processes even through their representatives in the School Governing Body. They also alluded to the fact that they are given guidance in terms of how they can assist their own children with their work and give support in different ways in order to meet school goals or expectations e.g. through homework supervision and meeting other requirements of sporting, cultural, social and academic activities. One of the parents said when asked in his language whether their inputs are taken seriously:

Ewe izimvo zethu zithathelwa ingqalelo kwaye siyayifumana inkxaso eyoneleyo kwiititshala nomphathi sikolo, ukanti wonke umntu esisebenzisana naye uyafikeleleka, siyancedisana ukuza nezisombululo xa kukho ingxaki.

This literally means:

Yes, our inputs are taken seriously and considered, we get all the support we require from staff and the principal, and we assist each other in dealing with challenges in order to have amicable solutions.

Therefore, this tells me that the majority of participants are satisfied with the manner in which the principal runs the school in collaboration with them. There is a sense of shared decision making amongst key stakeholders. Every body's input is valued regardless of who they are.

4.15 Dealing with Challenges

When Principal 2 of School B was asked whether challenges of any nature are handled professionally and effectively either at school or departmental level, this is what she said:

Yes, we handle challenges professionally and effectively. We made a vow with the SMT to attend to matters urgently and to allow space for resolving concerns positively. We respect each one's contribution towards bringing an amicable solution. We do not ignore the concerns instead we invite anyone with concerns to the office to deal with them. We give relevant contacts and information about available counselling sessions through the Employee Assistant Programme.

We investigate underlying causes for absenteeism. We support the staff and involve them in problem solving. We give direction to show love and support. We listen to each staff member when having emotional problems, because that affects his or her performance.

When the same question was posed to HOD 1, she responded by saying:

Some challenges are not dealt with professionally at district level. There is no sufficient support and caring from the district. Promises are not kept and no apology is given. The school must be allowed to come with their own policy of what kind of a learner they expect. District Officials interrupt in class without giving sufficient support

HOD 2 responded in the following manner after being asked the same question:

Yes, I concur with that statement, all the challenges that we face at school level we exercise professional attitude. If a teacher is at fault, she /he is called to the office

and subjected to one on one conversation with the principal. If misconduct has been committed, the principal invites the people who will counsel the person. Everything is treated with the confidentiality it deserves.

Educator 1 was asked the same question and she said:

At school level problems are dealt with professionally by the principal in the office. Tempers may rise if you are not professional. If you practice an acceptable manner of approach, people will accept you.

Educator 2 had this to say after the same question was posed to him:

We need our own ways of dealing with issues or challenges. Our education system is not using local capacity sufficiently but instead, it is more inclined to Western ways of doing things. When the teacher and the principal have to take decisions, there is confusion between African ways of doing things and religious ways of doing things. African culture teaches respect for each other, perseverance and hard work. This practice has to be reciprocal or mutual. The misuse of our freedom in South Africa is a challenge whereby there is lack of respect for authority and instead people fight authority. We realise that authority needs to fight back for respect. I think the district is supporting the school because some principals change even their own attitude. Teachers are consulted and respected; as a result attitude also changes.

This means that there are reservations from some participants about lack sufficient, appropriate and timeous intervention by the Department of Education when there are serious challenges that require them to intervene according to HOD 1 and Educator 1. Earlier on Educator 1 indicated that she does not think the CAPS and OBE are helpful to her and her children, hence she prefers the old system of teaching and pace setting. There is general consensus though that challenges are resolved amicably internally.

4.16 Document analysis for school B: post establishment

The post establishment of School B is composed of 13 teaching staff members, that is, 1 female Principal, 2 HODs a male and a female, 10 Post Level 1 educators 7 females and 3 males. Altogether, they have 9 females and 4 males according to 2014 Post Establishment

schedule. The non-teaching staff are composed of 2 General Assistants (GAs) who are both males and 1 Administrative Assistant (AA) who is a female.

TABLE 6: PROFILE OF THE PRINCIPAL AND STAFF PARTICIPANTS	AGE	GENDER	HIGHEST QUALIFICATION	TEACHING EXPERIENCE (YEARS)
PRINCIPAL	49 yrs	F	B ED (HONS)	20 yrs
HOD 1	48 yrs	F	JPTD	21 yrs
HOD 2	63 yrs	M	BA (HONS)	40 yrs
EDUCATOR 1	52 yrs	F	SPTD	28 yrs
EDUCATOR 2	43 yrs	M	B ED (HONS)	18 yrs

TABLE 7: ANA RESULTS FOR SCHOOL BY SUBJECT	GRADE	SCHOOL AVERAGE	YEAR
1. Language	3	65%	2012
2. Mathematics	3	67%	2012
3. Language	6	48%	2012
4. Mathematics	6	43%	2012
5. IsiZulu (HL)	1	65%	2013
6. Mathematics	1	66%	2013
7. IsiZulu (HL)	2	37%	2013
8. Mathematics	2	32%	2013
9. IsiZulu (HL)	3	48%	2013
10. Maths	3	60%	2013
11. English (FAL)	4	32%	2013
12. Maths	4	30%	2013
13. English (FAL)	5	42%	2013
14. Maths	5	43%	2013

15. English (FAL)	6	39%	2013
16. Maths	6	45%	2013
17. English (FAL)	7	50%	2013
18. Maths	7	33%	2013
19. IsiZulu (HL)	1	65%	2014
20. Maths	1	66%	2014
21. IsiZulu (HL)	2	37%	2014
22. Maths	2	32%	2014
23. IsiZulu (HL)	3	48%	2014
24. Maths	3	60%	2014
25. English (FAL)	4	32%	2014
26. Maths	4	30%	2014
27. English (FAL)	5	42%	2014
28. Maths	5	43%	2014
29. English (FAL)	6	39%	2014
30. Maths	6	45%	2014

4.17 Observation in School B

During my observation in School B, I noticed that there was a feeling of unity, peace, dedication and sacrifice that staff members and SGB demonstrated for the benefit of the institution. When I was invited as a guest speaker during the Grade 7 Graduation ceremony I witnessed the collaboration and constitutional values that were displayed by the teachers, parents, children and non-teaching staff and other stakeholders e.g.: respect and the Rule of Law are some of the important values that were demonstrated during my visits.

Not once did I hear learners or teachers or any staff member using vulgar language in my presence. I did not see graffiti on the walls of the school. Instead I saw a project in the school ground, in progress. A soccer field was being developed through the support that the school gets from their sponsors. I was also shown the renovations done by their sponsors in the classrooms.

Teachers were seen adhering to the times set for their classes. Learners were in class on time, and learning, every time I visited. This is in line with the mission of Gauteng Department of education which states that every learner must be in class on time and learn, every teacher must be in class on time teaching. GDE's vision is that:

“All learners must be given the best chance to do well at our centres of learning in order to leave those centres with the necessary skills, knowledge, values and qualifications that will create the best chances of success in their adult life.”

This is exactly what I witnessed in School B in terms of their efficiency and effectiveness. There was strategic planning in various aspects. I was told by the participants that the school was almost closed in the past few years by the Department of Education due to the decline of enrolment of learners, partly because of infighting, lack of commitment and support from the district. This was according to the views expressed by some of the educators during my visits at the school.

The school together with the current serving SGB members, did not give up, instead, they introduced the turn-around strategies that brought back discipline, the culture of teaching and learning, dedication and passion for this noble profession. These sentiments were echoed by some of the participants in this research.

I saw that the school was living up to its expectations and the high standards set by themselves, that is, collaboration between staff, SGB and the school community in various activities like admission awareness campaign, school marketing campaign, sports, farewell functions/ graduations, academic and other social activities.

However, during my visits in the third quarter it was difficult to secure successful appointments due to competing priorities, like ANA which took place in September 2014. This school was one of the sampled schools by GDE for the moderation of ANA results. At that time participants were cancelling confirmed appointments with me even if I was already there, due to urgent meetings or workshops or unannounced visits by GDE Officials. In this way, the planned visits by me were interrupted by this state of affairs.

Although, at first, it was difficult to win the hearts and minds of my participants, especially their trust and confidence in me, for fear of the unknown, they ultimately succumbed to my numerous requests and re-assurances about the anonymity and confidentiality that the findings were going to be dealt with by the researcher. I then managed to interview all the 16 participants in this study. Perseverance and persistence by the researcher and willingness by participants to be interviewed were all contributing factors to the success of this research.

However, the district officials were always held up in meetings or other work-related matters hence they could not be interviewed until February 2015, in line with the protocol of professional code of ethics.

The gestures and lack of confidence shown by at least two educators, who were participants in my study, regarding the capability and management skills of the principal, around matters of serious decision-making or curriculum issues, showed that they had serious reservations on these aspects.

One participant even claimed that she was the one who develops the principal and other teachers due to her expertise and experience, though she is still at PL 1. These sentiments were echoed by another HOD who was also a participant, who said that she is the one who invites district officials to empower staff members through workshops. She went further to highlight that the team building workshop that was convened in 2014 by her school, was her initiative. She claimed that she contributes a lot towards curriculum delivery. I did not participate in the research to avoid being distracted which could have led to me losing focus and compromising the validity and reliability of data collected.

4.18 ANA results at district and provincial levels

The Annexure 1 (Page 1) shows the performance of the district under which the two schools fall, compared to provincial and national results for 2013 and 2014. The results show that our district performed above our province in Mathematics and Languages from Grade 4-6,

except Grade 4 Language (HL), where the district obtained 64% compared to 71% at provincial level of Gauteng. In Grade 5 Mathematics JHB North district obtained 43% compared to 44% at province. In Grade 5 Language (HL), the district obtained 64% compared to 62% at province. In Grade 6 Mathematics, the district obtained 49% compared to 50% at province. In Grade 6 Language (HL) the district obtained 63% compared to 69% at province and 53% for both district and the province in Language (FAL). All the above statistics are for 2014.

The analysis of ANA results at district and provincial level show a small margin of less than 8% between the two. Therefore, there is no much difference in terms of district and provincial performance according to ANA results, except in Grade 4 Language (FAL) where the district obtained 62% compared to 48% at province in 2014. The difference here is 14%. Again, this shows that the district is doing fairly well.

Annexure 2 (page 2) shows that JHB North district was position 10 compared to 15 districts in Gauteng province with 87% average in 2013 and they were position 8 with 86% average in 2014. Gauteng Province was the top performing province in the country in the National Senior Certificate results of 2014 with an average of 84.7% as reflected in annexure 3.

4.19 CONCLUSION

Both School A and School B are historically disadvantaged in terms of socio-economic factors and they service communities who are faced by the same challenges of unemployment, poverty, crime and other social ills. They are both 100% black dominated, starting from children, staff to parents. They are located in Soweto. The lack of sufficient resources is common to both of them.

The concerns raised by the participants regarding the little support from their district, often coming late or not there at all in some instances, are also common in both schools. Both schools belong to the same district but are under different cluster leaders or IDSOs. Both

schools are struggling with dwindling learner numbers or declining enrolment, regardless of the success they have in most areas like improving learner performance and school image, as alluded to in my findings.

Both schools are led by female principals though they have different years of experience and leadership styles as reflected in their profiles and as alluded to by participants in their respective schools. Principal 1 of School A has 40 years of teaching experience including 15 years as a principal. Principal 2 of School B has 20 years of teaching experience including 2 years as an HOD and another 2 years as a principal.

School A was officially opened in 1981 and is currently 34 years old with a decent administration block but old building for the classrooms. School B was officially opened in 1974 and is 41 years old with no decent administration block and the building is very old. There is a decent fence around both schools. Both schools do not have science laboratories; instead they have computer laboratories which are often broken into by intruders or thieves who steal computers and other valuables during burglaries.

There are food gardens in both schools which are well maintained. The principals of these two schools use a combination of different leadership styles as alluded to by the participants of this study. It is clear that there is no “one size fits all” when it comes to their leadership styles and management approaches. Unity, team work, collaboration, shared decision making and common vision seem to be the driving force of their inspiration and success.

The next chapter will look into detailed analysis and interpretation of data by cross validation of data (triangulation) during my study. The interpretation and discussions are based on the themes developed for analysis in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS OF DATA AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

My study was informed by triangulation (multi-method strategy) design method of data collection which allowed me to use both qualitative and quantitative data. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) refer to triangulation as a way of obtaining convergent data using cross-validation. I have used interviews, observation and document analysis to collect data for the same purpose, that is, cross-validation and credibility. Strauss and Corbin (1990), as quoted by Simon (2011), posit that researchers translate the conceptual model into a story line that will be read by others. Ideally, the research report will be a rich, tightly woven account that “closely approximates the reality it represents.”

5.2 Research findings:

Results are presented in relation to the overall purpose of the study, that is, by examining the most effective and efficient ways and strategies which are used by successful principals in raising and sustaining high levels of learner performance in difficult contexts.

Seven themes emerged in response to the main research question (topic) in describing the role of the principal as an instructional leader in improving learner performance.

5.2.1 Capacity building

Both Principal 1 and Principal 2 in School A and School B understood the significance of empowering their subordinates for the purpose of realising school objectives. Both principals hold the belief that if you empower your staff you are not only playing your role as a leader but you are making them more effective, efficient and strong/competent enough to deal with all sorts of challenges that they may encounter in future.

Both principal agreed that each individual is unique, with his/her strengths and weaknesses. Therefore it is critical to expose them to a variety of opportunities for the purpose of sharing good practice and dealing with their weaknesses in a constructive manner. They seemed to

acknowledge that you can turn your weaknesses into strengths if you work collaboratively with your colleagues, without being judged.

The issue of motivating staff and coming up with strategic planning in order to realise the school's vision and its objectives has emerged as a critical element towards school success and a source of inspiration to staff and other stakeholders who share the same vision e.g.: parents and SGB members.

For instance, Principal 2 in School B highlighted that they call regular workshops every year for the purpose of team building, amongst other things. She went on to say:

Out of these activities they realise the significance of budgeting for capacity building workshops, as part of strategic planning.

This activity allows them an opportunity to do their SWOT analysis with the aim of addressing their weaknesses and threats; and using their strengths and opportunities at their disposal to forge a way forward on a matter of common interest. What was also emphasised was the need to do introspection without being judgemental or using blame to discredit others. Honesty with oneself was emphasised during the capacity building workshop convened by School B.

Both principals acknowledged that if you empower your staff and other stakeholders of the school, you can then be assured that everything will fall into place whether you are there or not as a leader. Therefore, the school can function effectively and efficiently under any circumstances. Jacobson (et al., 2005: 613) posits that the principal is expected to develop; influence and support staff and students constantly in order to attain organisational goals.

All of the participants in School A and B, which is the principals, HODs and educators, alluded to the fact that their districts (GDE) sought to empower them through regular workshops and meetings targeted for different needs of schools. They also appreciate the school's initiatives for capacity building. Interestingly enough, Educator 1 of School B claimed that she gets guidance from the IDSO and she went further to say:

I help the principal and HODs due to my 28 years of teaching experience. I know many things that I share with them. If I encounter any challenge I consult with the IDSO.

Surely, the above statement by Educator 1 in School B shows that she does not give credit to her SMT or principal for the role they also claim to be playing in empowering staff members at school.

Secondly, Educator 2 in School A, who also boasts with 36 years of teaching experience, feels very strongly that people who are sent to schools as coaches' lack the necessary skills to develop the staff at the school. More often than not, she objects to the pedagogy and unrealistic pace set by those coaches who are sent to schools under Gauteng Primary Literacy and Mathematics (GPLMS) programme. As she puts it in her own words:

People without expertise come to attend to our challenges... They have neither answers nor expertise of their field. I suggest that the Department of Education employs teachers with expertise in the teaching field. Teachers have relevant experience and expertise to do the same job, as required by law. They know each challenge that we are faced with.

The implication of the above concern raised by Educator 2 in School A emanates from the premise that says GPLMS coaches deployed at schools should follow departmental policies to the latter without compromising any educational standards, as per their contractual obligation signed or entered into with GDE.

This educator feels very strongly that, under the current circumstances, there is no flexibility either from GDE or coaches themselves, whereby the teachers are allowed to use their professional judgement and discretion in applying governmental policies to the letter.

For instance, one of the requirements that the teacher highlighted is that the promotional requirements according to the National Protocol of Assessment (NPA) from Grade R to Grade 12, stipulate clearly that learners must be promoted to the next grades even if they are not ready, due to their age cohort or if they have failed more than once in the same phase. They cannot be older than three years of the required age for each grade. According to the NPA a child should be 6 years old in Grade 1 or should be turning 6 on the 1st June of

each year in Grade 1. That child cannot be kept in the same Grade 1 if she/he is older than 9 years and is allowed to fail only once in any phase. However, this can be allowed only up to Grade 11 not Grade 12 in South African schools.

5.2.2 Professional development

Those schools that have identified clear performance targets for pupils use development planning to achieve these targets by concentrating simultaneously on related improvements inside and outside the classroom in particular, and on management arrangements (Hopkins, 1997).

All participants in both schools understand the significance of professional development in order to enhance learner performance, effectiveness and efficiency in their daily routines. They all agree that everyone's input on issues of staff development is highly appreciated and valued. Teamwork and engagement of different stakeholders in professional development is embraced in both schools.

According to Principal 1 in School A, professional development helps teachers to focus on their teaching in order to achieve maximum benefit and to improve themselves. In the same school, HOD 1 and Educator 1 raised concerns about the scepticism that some of the colleagues have shown when new changes have to be introduced in the school. HOD 1 said:

Other staff members are comfortable with the old style or ideas.

Educator 1 said:

Though my colleagues value my input in staff development, they take time to understand and the projects that I personally initiate often take too long to take off from the ground due to the resistance or reservations that some have in my initiatives.

Educator 1 in School A was referring to the funding she was claiming to have secured through the National Lottery Board, which was to be utilised for Sports related activities at her school.

Although she claims that she was transparent in terms of what the terms and conditions were for utilising those funds in line with National Lottery Board requirements, she

struggled to gain trust from her colleagues in order to use the money for its intended purpose, even with all the supporting documents in place for accountability purposes.

This is one of the challenges that may hinder progress, efficiency and effectiveness if it is not dealt with in any organisation. Trust, integrity and competence are the cornerstones for a successful working relationship.

A contradiction was raised by Educator 2 of School A when she claimed to be making contribution towards curriculum development by following the policies in order not to divert from what is expected by the Department of Education. On the other hand, she insisted that she wants to be left alone and allowed to use her professional judgement and discretion in applying departmental policies with regard to promotional requirements and pace setting regarding curriculum delivery. She preferred to have a situation where she could be allowed to prioritize certain key aspects of the curriculum over others and to drill learners on those areas that need more time for the learners to master them.

It is my view as a researcher, that policy matters are non-negotiable at this stage unless there is engagement even before they are endorsed at senior level to make them legally binding documents. When they have passed that test, these should be implemented by those who have the responsibility to implement them, in this case, school management and the staff at large. There should be consistency in their application on the ground in line with the basic requirements. In that way, schools may be benchmarked on the same level.

Monitoring and support will inform the intervention strategies required for each unique case. This view does not in any way suggest that there should not be robust debate around policy matters in order to influence change. That is why there should be inputs, consultation, communication and obtaining of consensus from the relevant stakeholders, that is, policy makers and representatives of policy implementers or beneficiaries thereof, every time when important decisions around policy matters have to be made.

It is clear that leaders in both School A and B understand very well the significance of being actively involved in school matters, and that professional development is a powerful tool for

improving general school functionality. The emphasis in both schools is that staff members and School Governing Body members should all be developed or empowered in order to ensure that they become effective and efficient in realising organisational goals, that is, teaching and learning. There is no doubt that this accounts for improved learner performance.

Another participant in this study who is Educator 1 in School B raised another contradiction when she said the current education system in South Africa, which is, Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) and the Outcome Based Education (OBE) do not work for her and as such she does not feel that she is being developed as a person. This comment went against her initial statement when she was asked whether she feels she is given guidance in leadership. Initially, she agreed that she is being given guidance by the district through the IDSO and is assisted when encountering challenges. Interestingly, she did not give credit to her SMT for guidance but instead claimed to be the one who assisted the SMT and the less experienced colleagues due to her own extensive experience.

It is also interesting to note that, according to her profile, she has a Senior Primary Teachers' Diploma (SPTD) as her highest qualification as opposed to those who possess academic qualifications over and above their first professional qualifications as educators.

However, the same educator now feels strongly that the old methodology, which was geared towards promoting rote learning or drilling method for learners to grasp the subject matter, works better for her than CAPS or OBE. She said that:

I recommend that the previous method of teaching should be used. South Africa is performing badly in Maths compared to the world. In the past it was different. For instance, 4 basic skills were emphasised, that is, Addition, Subtraction, Multiplication and Division. Each was drilled until the learners mastered them. Today 5 outcomes are the main focus in Maths, that is, Patterns, Relationships, Measurement and data handling. These are supposed to be taught in one week. We are taking things that failed in other countries to our country, South Africa.

Surely this statement shows that the teacher implies that she is responsible for professional development and capacity building of her colleagues including the SMT. Unfortunately, this view was never confirmed by any of the participants. In my view this self-praise does not invalidate the collaboration amongst staff members and parents that the other participants in the same School B alluded to.

5.2.3 Leadership styles and management approaches

A combination of different leadership styles seems to be the best way of making our schools more effective and efficient. According to a case study conducted by General Teaching Council in England, which focused on learner-centred leadership in the 21st century, there was a tangible culture of hard work and learner achievement (Patrick, et al., 2004).

Here the main focus was on teaching and learning more than administration. Everyone was playing an active role. For instance, leaders (head teachers) brought initiatives for change and there was sustainability of those initiatives. Staff shared a common vision with head teachers and believed in the head teachers' personal values, commitment and energy through shared leadership. There was a positive school culture and climate which determined the success, sustainability and consistency of initiatives during learning and teaching.

Bush and Glover (2002) posit that instructional leadership focuses mainly on teaching and learning. Likewise, Spillane (2001) argues that distributed leadership is about distributing responsibilities amongst multiple leaders or followers, either in a democratic or autocratic manner.

During my study in School A and School B, I discovered that, without a doubt, teaching and learning is prioritised in their daily activities. However, there is a contradiction in the sense that both schools complain that there are a lot of administrative tasks that principals are performing, over and above the responsibility of serving as role models in the classrooms by also teaching. The principals complain about having to abandon their lessons if there are urgent calls to attend to in the office or there are department officials who visit them at their schools unannounced and urgently insist on either speaking to them or ask them to

complete certain questionnaires or any official documents that are required by the Department of Education.

Sometimes, principals have to attend important departmental meetings during the course of the day and leave their learners unattended to, during their teaching periods. The use of a relief timetable in this instance is for the benefit of another teacher who takes over but teachers used those periods to complete or supplement her or his own work. As a result, those learners who are taught by the principal do not get enough attention under these circumstances.

However, in the case of these two principals they have shown their dedication and determination to succeed by using every slightest opportunity at their disposal to teach their learners but also to manage teaching and learning in general through monitoring and support of the staff. They admit though that this is: 'not a one-man-show', instead it is a collective effort by different teams who are accountable to them, the parents and Department of Education. This is where I think strategic planning is utilised because the two schools can still deliver under these difficult circumstances, hence, in my view this is how they earned the title of 'resilient schools' (Christie and Lingard, 2001).

The leadership capabilities of the two principals and the effectiveness of their different management approaches seem to be yielding positive results, due to the amount of support and co-operation they receive from educators, parents, non-teaching staff and learners themselves. This is against the backdrop that they feel the district office does not give them sufficient support or does not respond adequately and timeously to some of their pressing needs around issues of infrastructure, furniture and other important administrative items/tools like photocopier, computers, etc., especially if there was burglary at school.

There is acknowledgement by all participants in both School A and B and also by district officials that there is constant but targeted support and monitoring that the district office gives to schools. These include amongst others issues of LTSM, Curriculum, Finances and Workshops/Meetings which are conducted by GDE for schools, depending on the needs identified through School Improvement Plans or School Readiness Instruments or Annual

Surveys. This includes opportunities created by schools themselves in collaboration with the district to share good practice.

This study has revealed that good, effective and efficient leadership styles account for good learner performance. This finding confirms the previous studies that showed a link between learner performance and school leadership (Reynolds, et al., 2001; Hopkins, 2001; Hams, et al., 2006). I am now convinced that schools either succeed or fail at the level of leadership.

Both district officials linked the success of School A and B to good management, effective systems in place, and involvement of community, parents and their specific roles that they play in the teaching and learning activities of the schools.

This study has also revealed that educators, parents and principals themselves of the two schools associate their success under the challenging circumstances in their respective schools, to a combination of various leadership styles that they use. What is clear, and a common factor to both schools, are the elements of democratic, participative, distributive and instructional leadership styles, which appear to be the cornerstones for their success in both schools.

5.2.4 Learner performance and strategic intervention

According to research findings, management of teaching and learning accounts for 5-7% of learner achievement across schools. (Leithwood, K., et al., 2006). Hoadley (2007: 1) concede that leadership is both vital and necessary towards improving student outcomes. Assessment of learning is summative and its main purpose is to grade and certify student achievement, while assessment for learning is formative and its aim is to support and advance students in their learning (Black and William, 1998, 2003; Gibbs, 2006).

During my study of School A and B when both Principal 1 and 2 were asked how they manage to improve learner performance, they clearly showed their understanding of their leadership roles as instructional leaders to improve learner performance. None of the participants showed any dereliction of their responsibilities when it came to teaching and learning. However, the contradiction came when Principal 1 of School A stated honestly that

the administrative burden on principals contradicts the teaching and learning expectation of the Department of Education. As a result of doing time-consuming and demanding administrative work, this is a compromise that principals have to make.

In my opinion, the principals also showed the “know how “ to balance assessment for learning through the lessons they offer on a daily basis, and assessment of learning using ANA and other weekly/monthly/quarterly assessment tasks.

The ANA results as reflected in Table 4 and Table 7 show this consistency of learner performance especially in School A.

The intervention strategies that both schools claim to be employing to improve results seem to be effective as alluded to by the two district officials. The two district officials agreed that ANA is a reliable and credible form of assessment of learning. Although it is primarily diagnostic in its nature, it serves to expose areas that need attention by schools and department of education, which is useful for informing future planning and learning.

Both schools alluded to the fact that they do analysis of results to inform the nature and form of intervention required by both educators and their learners. An item-by-item analysis or question-by-question analysis and learner responses thereof clearly point to where intervention is required. Furthermore Formative Assessment is continuous and allows immediate intervention.

District Official 2 raised a concern about the low quality of tests or assessment tasks that some schools give to learners. She claimed that they do not meet the required standards as reflected in Bloom’s Taxonomy. According to this model, tests or assessment tasks must be balanced in terms of increasing difficulty by testing the following:

1. Knowledge
2. Understanding
3. Application
4. Analysis
5. Synthesis

6. Evaluation

The same district official also indicated that although there are ongoing developmental workshops to address the above concern and that there are many other related challenges, she did not elaborate on this. Both Principals concurred that it is their responsibility to support teachers, learners and parents in order to meet their obligation in terms of teaching and learning. They use different leadership styles, management approaches and strategies to do this as already confirmed by different participants in this research. Principal 1 of School A claims that she uses an inclusive approach that promotes collaboration in her school during decision making. Whereas Principal 2 of School B claims that she uses strategic planning and her influence for decision making at her school. They claim that they are leading by example, hence, they also teach. And they ensure that teachers are in class on time teaching and learners are learning.

In my view, based on my observation, I believe that both schools subscribe to the broader vision of the Department of Education which says:

“All learners should be assisted to do well at school and acquire the necessary skills, knowledge, values and qualifications that will create the best chance of success in their adult life” (Department of Education, 2014).

According to the mission statement of the Gauteng Department of Education, the above statement can be realised only if “every classroom has a teacher teaching learners every time every day and learners learn.” This implies quality teaching time should be spent with learners in class, doing school work. Educators should honour their periods by teaching the learners in line with current curriculum requirements of CAPS. This suggests that there should be value for money in all that teachers, principals, parents, learners and other stakeholders do for the benefit of the school. It seems as if this is exactly what is happening at the two schools regardless of the challenges that they are faced with.

District Official 1 attributed the success of the school under his jurisdiction to the active involvement of parents, community and other key stakeholders in the decision making on

governance and curriculum matters. This position was confirmed by those parents and educators who were participants in this study.

5.2.5 Promotion of positive school culture

According to research findings, good quality professional development and involvement in innovative activities have contributed to helping teachers not only to recognise their own skills but also to feel valued by others according to the Office of Standards for Education (OFFSTED, 2002). All of the participants in School A and B conceded that their inputs are taken seriously on issues of common interest like curriculum development, leadership, management, governance, concerns and challenges.

A change of school culture was demonstrated as teachers become enthusiastic about being involved in innovative practice when they take advantage of opportunities which support their work with students, and when they are keen to contribute to something they perceive as professionally rewarding. In these schools, teachers said that they felt valued. This leads to teachers who are receptive to embracing change because they know that the leader will support them through the change process. An example of this acceptance of change is revealed by the way teachers are enthusiastically adopting ICT (Information Computer Technology) to enhance their teaching, and in trialling new curriculum software and using a range of new resources in teaching, which tested their traditional and more familiar approaches (OFFSTED, 2002).

This claim by OFFSTED (2002) has been proven to be helpful in both School A and B due to the fact that new ideas are accepted when put on the table, according to the participants in this study. However, Educator 1 and HOD 1 in School A highlighted scepticism that their colleagues have when new changes are introduced and must be implemented. The desire to remain in their comfort zone seems to be an easy option for some staff members. It is the influence of those staff members who are hungry for new ideas that will ultimately be those who shape the new school culture. It was found in the two schools that their influence cannot be underestimated. The fact that opportunities are created for robust debate and exchange of ideas by the proactive management and leadership in the two schools allows

for influential people to shape the direction and gives each institution a roadmap to follow in order to realise its objectives.

Personally, I believe that change is a painful exercise and takes time. However, it is worth the effort if it is embraced in a collaborative or collegial manner as a united team. The promotion of a positive school culture that is intended to enhance the realisation of school goals is the way to go in my opinion. For instance, in Gauteng Province one of the GDE's strategic pillars for the next five years is to introduce paperless classrooms by using ICT education.

The current MEC (Member of Executive Council) of Education in Gauteng has introduced a pilot project about the use of tablets for each learner which started this year (2015) in Thembisa township schools, which is part of East Rand within the Gauteng province. This is a clear determination by our progressive and proactive MEC to break the old tradition of teaching and learning using paper and a chalkboard in the classroom.

5.2.6 Dealing with challenges

Both School A and School B alluded to the fact that they resolve internal matters including conflict in a professional and amicable manner. They claimed to follow the due process of the law, where and when it is necessary. Principal 1 of School A also acknowledged that they know the legal implications of their actions; hence, they also involve union representatives to advise their members with some of the challenges that warrant external intervention.

The concerns raised by both schools through the participants in this study include lack of or insufficient support from the district on matters that require urgent attention from the top. This was emphasised by Principal 1 of School A when she said:

At district level sometimes relevant feedback is not received by the school timeously, furniture is not provide to us on time and lost items like photocopiers, fax, and computers are not replaced immediately after burglary.

This shows the discomfort, dissatisfaction schools have and the lack of sufficient support from the district as alluded in the above situation.

This was in contradiction to what both district officials who were participants in this study said. The district officials painted a bright picture in terms of the support they claim to be giving to all schools in similar conditions. District Official 1 said:

We pounce on schools unannounced to get a clear picture of what is happening on the ground, though we do not act as police. We look into the priorities of the school based on 9 focus areas. We advise the school to draw and implement their Academic Improvement Plan. We ask them to do a SWOT analysis as a basis for their success. We assist them to close those gaps where they have weaknesses and threats. We emphasise that their strengths and opportunities should be used to their advantage. We then monitor and support the implementation of those processes as a district or department officials.

In my view, though there are serious reservations about lack of sufficient support and timeous feedback from the department of education, according to the claims made by both schools, these schools appear to be resolute in their endeavour to achieve their organisational goals or vision. They are resilient in this regard regardless of the adverse conditions they operate under.

5.2.7 Efficiency and effectiveness of intervention strategies

When I asked both District Official 1 and 2 about how they measure ‘effectiveness’ and ‘efficiency’ of their intervention strategies they said:

Each case is treated on its merit. We investigate by using different monitoring or reporting tools, to get a clear picture of the nature and form of challenges that each institution has. Our intervention is informed by the outcome of the diagnosis that we make in each case. Those cases that are common are dealt with in a collective fashion whereby all schools with similar challenges are grouped together and their challenges are addressed under one roof. However, unique cases are attended to per individual school and individual need. Some of the challenges that we support schools with depending on what has been identified by them, include but are not limited to late coming by staff and learners, lack of parental involvement, non-functionality of SGB, poor attendance to parent meetings, absenteeism by staff and learners, poor learner performance, etc.

Both district officials said the efficiency and effectiveness of their intervention strategies is measured on the basis of the following indicators:

- * Improved learner performance (upward movement as opposed to decline in academic results).
- * Improved teacher and learner attendance, and time management.
- * Improved parental involvement/participation and attendance to school parent meetings, and SGB functionality.
- * Benchmarking our schools, district and province against national and international standards. Our view is that ANA meets international standards in terms of quality assurance and questions are set in line with CAPS requirements.
- * The responses we get from schools and evidence verified against those responses, in a form of monitoring and supporting tools, gives us an indication of the effectiveness and efficiency of our intervention strategies, at different levels of our schooling system.

District Official 2 went further to say that:

Teachers are concerned about pace setters that are not user friendly and that impact negatively on their performance. For instance, they claim that there is too much workload which must be covered within a short space of time per subject. As a result, teachers resort to teaching the test and compromise the quality of education offered to learners. In the 3rd term, teachers tend to focus on teaching ANA rather than infusing ANA activities through their daily lessons throughout the year, with the main focus being the areas where learners are struggling"

It is very interesting to note that district official 2 was aware about some of the very critical challenges which confront teachers in general. She alluded to the fact that learners with challenges or learning barriers are not adequately attended to or supported. She was cautious though not to apportion blame to anyone in this regard. She also disclosed that there are discrepancies between School Based Assessment (SBA) and ANA, hence, the quality of SBAs is questionable. This implies that performance of learners in SBA is higher than ANA results across the majority of the schools in general. ANA is set externally whereas

SBA is set internally and includes a number of different formal assessment tasks from Term One to Term Three or Four depending on subject requirements.

5.3 Limitations of this study and gaps for future research

- My study did not sufficiently cover how staff and leadership at school level measure the effectiveness and efficiency of intervention strategies in their daily activities.
- This study did not enquire about how participants use a positive school culture to enforce discipline and ensure high quality teaching and learning. Although good practices of fostering a positive school culture of learning were evident in both schools, this implied that a positive school culture was embraced by all stakeholders.
- The study only focused on the 'resilient schools' and by extension was more biased towards good practices of some of the best township schools that succeed under adverse conditions. It did not extend the scope of enquiry to underperformance by other schools in similar conditions, as part of the research problem. This implies that the issue of resources and being the historically disadvantaged school must not be used as an excuse for poor learner achievement.
- The number of participants in the study was limited to 16 and the findings of the study are therefore enabling me to make informed decisions about this case and they can be used as hypothesis for more wide scale research. The conclusion on what I believe accounts for high learner performance in the 'resilient schools' is based on empirical evidence gathered from only two schools and research findings as reflected in previous studies conducted in other 'resilient schools (Christie and Lingard, 2001).
- My research focused more on ANA results which is summative assessment (Assessment of Learning), without making a balance with SBA and/or formative assessment which is Assessment for Learning. The issue of quality of SBA as raised

by the District Official 2 in this study needs to be examined further in future research. The credibility, validity and reliability of using ANA results as an indicator for measuring effective and efficient schools or their leadership and management approaches needs further examination.

- A future study should respond to the following research questions: how are the questions set, who sets the questions, how are they moderated, how they are mediated to learners, how they are marked, who marks them, how the memorandum is made, how reliable is the memorandum, how rigid or flexible is the memorandum?

5.4 Comparison of ANA results (analysis) between School A and School B

School A has shown remarkable progress on learner performance in all subjects, that is, Language and Mathematics from Grade 2–6 between 2012 and 2014. However, what I discovered in this analysis is that School B only performed better than School A in Grade 1, with the exception of Maths results which were at 71% on school average in 2014 for School A and 66% on school average in the same year in School B.

It is worth noting that during my data collection and document analysis, School B did not have all the records for 2012 in other grades except the Grade 3 & 6 ANA results, hence, my scope of analysis was limited to 2013 and 2014 at this particular school.

Secondly, it appears though that there is visible consistency in the performance of learners in School B, which almost make the results predictable for each subject and grade in the following year. For instance, if one looks at school average in 2013 for School B, the same results appear in 2014. Although the consistency is better than declining results or declining learner performance, there might be other factors that will require further examination or research in order to affirm or dispute this empirical evidence.

Lastly, School B has shown better learner performance in Grade 3 Language and Mathematics for 2012. School B average was at 65% in Language whereas School A obtained

60% in the same Language, year and grade. School B obtained 67% in Mathematics for 2012 and School A obtained 61% in the same subject, year and grade. It is also worth noting that School A Maths results declined significantly in 2013 in Grade 6 to 37% compared to the previous year and 2014. This made School B to be on top by 45% school average in the same subject, year and grade.

5.5 Implications of ANA results

Firstly, from Table 20, we realize that the performance of learners in subjects that are in their Home Language is far better than the performance in subjects that are in their First Additional Language. This means those learners who do English or any African Language including Afrikaans, as a Home Language tend to achieve higher levels compared to those who do those languages as their First Additional Language.

Secondly, the performance of learners in Mathematics in lower grades is higher than the performance in higher grades. A specific example in Table 20 is that the national performance in Grade 1 Mathematics from 2012–2014 was 68% for 2012, 60% for 2013 and 68% for 2014. In Grade 9 Mathematics, the performance was 13% in 2012, 14% in 2013 and 11% in 2014.

In the national Home Language performance in Grade 6, the average percentage was 43% in 2012, 59% in 2013 and 63% in 2014. In the First Additional Language the national performance in Grade 6 was 36% in 2012, 46% in 2013 and 45% in 2014.

This implies that second language speakers struggle where they do the language as their First Additional Language. First language speakers do well where their language of teaching and learning (LOLT) is their home language as well. In addition, it is clear why the two ‘resilient school’ earned this label. The fact that both School A and B use English as a First Additional Language, Xhosa for School A and Zulu for School as Home Languages, proves the point that some of the township schools in South Africa succeed even under adverse conditions.

5.6 Conclusion

The effectiveness and efficiency of any institution cannot only be measured on the basis of results or learner performance. Leadership styles and management approaches should be considered before arriving at a conclusive evidence for effectiveness and efficiency. Other contributing factors like how challenges are handled cannot be ignored due to the negative impact they may have in hindering progress in an institution or organisation. Learning organisations develop their communities, leaders and subordinates, produce good results (quality), sustain their achievements and always adapt to change. Hayes (et al., 2003) argues that when educational leaders lead learning, they build professional learning communities that focus on improved outcomes for all students within the context of pressure and support.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Introduction (Main argument)

I maintain that there are still best performing township schools that are operating under adverse conditions despite ANA report from 2012 to 2014. I concede though that our general learner performance as a country, that is, South Africa is still below international standards in Mathematics and Languages (Fleisch, 2008).

This study has revealed the most effective and efficient ways and strategies that successful principals use to raise and/or sustain high levels of learner achievement in different contexts. Christie and Lingard (2001) describe schools which succeed under challenging circumstances as 'resilient schools'. Therefore, the two township primary schools which were being examined in my study seem to have these elements of resilience in their daily operations, despite the adverse conditions under which they operate.

Moreover, this study has shown that there is a link between leadership and learner performance. For instance, the leadership styles and management approaches used by both principals are similar and the common factors are democracy, participation, delegation, collaboration (team work) and instructional leadership. The commitment, sacrifices, determination to succeed, sharing of common vision, unity, positive school culture, parental involvement, learner support and discipline of both teachers and learners are some of the key factors that I believe contribute to the best performance of the two schools.

6.2.1 Aims of the study

The aims of the study were based on the assumption that school leadership contributes towards improved learner achievement. Leithwood, (et al., 2006) posits that management of teaching and learning accounts for 5-7% of learner achievement across schools. In addition Hoadley (2007: 1) maintains that leadership is vital and necessary towards improving student outcomes.

Furthermore, during my study in School A and B, when both Principal 1 and Principal 2 were asked how they manage to improve learner performance, they clearly showed their understanding of their leadership roles as instructional leaders, to improve learner performance. None amongst the participants showed any dereliction of duty when it came to teaching and learning. What was clear though was the fact that there is enormous pressure from the Department of Education that expects principals to do a lot of administration tasks, attend meetings/workshops and teach learners in class at the same time.

The situation that I am narrating here shows how dedicated, committed, hardworking and determined are leaders and managers in School A and School B, let alone the other daily challenges that they are confronted with. For these schools to succeed it requires them to have emotional intelligence, strategic thinking, effective and efficient ways of managing and leading their schools. My study has revealed that they have all that it takes to be an effective and efficient leader and manager under adverse conditions. That is why, in my understanding, they have earned the name 'resilient schools' according to Christie and Lingard (2001).

There is no doubt in my mind that both school principals are indeed 'instructional leaders'. Southworth (2002) argues that instructional leadership is strongly concerned with teaching and learning, including professional learning of teachers as well as student growth. Bush (2003: 16-17) posits that instructional leadership targets the school's central activities which are teaching and learning. However, he concedes that this paradigm underestimates other aspects of school life, such as sport, socialisation, student welfare and self-esteem.

My research has clearly shown that the two principals are using a combination of leadership styles and management approaches. I think this scenario accounts for these high levels of learner performance and/ or consistency in the two schools. They used 'participative', 'collaborative', 'distributive' and 'democratic leadership' styles, effective and efficient management approaches over and above the instructional leadership style.

6.2.2 My contribution to the research field and discourse

The two schools seem to be sharing many things in common. For instance, they are both township primary schools and start from Grade R to Grade 7. Their size is almost the same in terms of infrastructure or building and grounds, except learner enrolment and staff establishment. They are both led and managed by females, though School A Principal 1 is more experienced with 40 years of teaching experience, including 15 years as a principal in the same school. Principal 2 of School B has 20 years of teaching experience including 2 years as an HOD and 2 years as a principal in the same school.

Both principals seem to be having a common vision of being change agents at their respective schools; hence they are influential as instructional leaders to both staff and governors of their schools. Their positive impact in the manner in which they lead and manage their schools is clearly visible through their leadership and management skills, knowledge, values and attitude they have shown during my research at their schools. The good human relations and collaboration (collegiality) amongst different stakeholders in each school, all account for high levels of learner performance.

In my opinion, it was my intention to compare 'apples with apples' by subjecting two schools of similar backgrounds, to this kind of study. The two schools were chosen on the basis of their similar circumstances they operate under, their historical background as formerly disadvantaged and most importantly for the good performance by learners under such conditions, as shown in the Annual National Assessment for the past three years. I believe the research findings are valid, reliable and fair. Moreover they confirm what other

studies have revealed; to say there are 'resilient schools' which are successful at different levels, to achieve their organisational goals under challenging circumstances (Christie and Lingard, 2001).

6.3 Conclusions

What is the role of a principal as an instructional leader in improving learner performance? The assumption is that there is a link between leadership and learner performance. My study and other previous studies suggest that indeed the link does exist between leadership and learner performance.

However, I continue to maintain my position in the midst of all these challenges, that there are still those schools that succeed even though they operate under adverse conditions. Christie and Lingard (2001) name such schools as 'resilient schools' due to their resilience and success against all odds.

I have looked at the contributing factors towards this success of resilient schools in our townships. My motivation for examining this phenomenon is the intention to share good practice with other schools in similar situations with the hope that resilient schools will serve as role models and source of inspiration. Moreover, the study has also revealed that the issue of sufficient resources does not necessarily determine the success of an institution though it is a significant element for high learner achievement. This implies that if the issues of resources are not ignored by the Department of Education there is a possibility that these township schools may perform far much better than currently. Furthermore, that may boost the staff morale and the attitude of learners towards schooling.

In addition the 'resilient schools' are trying their best to find further assistance and funding either in cash or kind from other potential donors or sponsors. This has proven to be helpful in both schools hence their success. The benefits of this study extend to policy-makers who may influence decision-making for future planning at either school or departmental level. The research findings give answers for the provision of high quality of education and also provide important lessons for the Department of Education as a whole on issues which need

serious attention. For instance, if the issue of support to schools is taken seriously especially on the matters raised by participants during the interviews, there is a potential that many schools may join the ranks of successful schools sooner than later.

The study has also shown that leaders of successful schools use a combination of leadership styles and management approaches, to make their schools effective and efficient. Kotter (1990) suggests that there should be a balance between management and leadership in any organisation. He acknowledges that we all have our weaknesses and strengths. He concedes that some good leaders are bad managers, and some good managers are bad leaders.

It is against this background that I propose that there should be collaboration between all stakeholders of an organisation in order to complement and support one another for the purpose of achieving organisational goals or a common vision. Instructional leadership has become a key factor in this study due to the fact that the research topic is about identifying the role of the principal as an instructional leader in improving learner performance.

This study has shown that Principal 1 from School A and Principal 2 from School B are both instructional leaders and as such lead by example in their respective schools. Their roles as managers and leaders of curriculum delivery have been illuminated by their concession to the fact that they are also teachers with the responsibility and obligation to teach certain subjects. On the basis of this finding, I realised that they are continuously serving as role models to their colleagues.

This study has also revealed that the principals of the two schools work very closely with their staff members and other stakeholders in a collaborative manner, in order to achieve their organisational goals. This leadership style amongst others has yielded positive results/outcomes in ensuring that there is effective teaching and learning at those schools. The management approaches adopted by both principals have also shown positive and consistent results on learner performance. All these claims were confirmed by different participants in my study and analysis of results as reflected in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 respectively.

In this research, the author has focused on the following 7 essential themes which form a solid base for my main argument:

1. Capacity building,
2. Professional development,
3. Leadership styles and Management approaches,
4. Dealing with challenges,
5. Learner performance and Strategic interventions,
6. Promotion of positive school culture,
7. Efficiency and Effectiveness of Intervention Strategies.

6.4 Recommendations for policy makers, principals, staff and parents, and gaps for further research (Implications)

6.4.1 Policy-makers

The District Officials and other Department of Education Officials at Provincial and National levels should screen Independent Service Providers thoroughly prior to them being given tenders to run the affairs of the Department of Education. There should be quality assurance checks and balances with regard to such service providers to ensure that high quality of education is provided and that schools are genuinely supported. This recommendation is informed by the concern raised by Educator 2 of School A when she questioned the credibility, knowledge, understanding and skills of such service providers especially on Curriculum Issues in a form of GPLMS.

Districts and Provinces should be empowered by the Department of Basic Education to respond adequately and timeously to the challenges faced by schools especially when such challenges are brought to their attention. For instance, both School A and School B raised serious concerns about lack of sufficient support to them in terms of furniture, replacement of critical items stolen from schools during burglary, intervention during serious conflict/misconduct, issues of promotional requirements in relation to the age cohort of learners and retention/promotion of learners in each grade/phase, curriculum pace setters which are unrealistic according to staff members as confirmed by District Official 2.

District Official 2 alluded to the fact that schools end up teaching the test by drilling their learners for ANA rather than infusing each challenging aspect of ANA within their daily programme (lessons). Perhaps the latter is caused by enormous pressure put on educators by the Department of Education, to improve learner performance.

Resource Budget allocation for each school should be increased not on the basis of learner numbers as it is the case currently in South African Schools. It should be based on the school needs and should extend beyond the current scope which covers LTSM, Municipal Services and minor maintenance; moreover the allocation of funds is ring-fenced. Instead, it should include functions of major renovation of school infrastructure, school building and other administrative requirements for logistics. This recommendation calls for the change of the model that the Department of Basic Education is currently using to determine school budget allocation across the board in South Africa. In addition, School A complained about the lack of adequate support and timeous response to their urgent needs which have financial implications on them.

6.4.2 Principals and Staff

- Principals should be visionaries, influential and lead from the centre without in any way compromising their duties
- They should use a combination of leadership styles and effective management approaches in a balanced manner. Kotter (1990) maintains that principals must keep a balance between leadership and management as the two skills complement each other.
- I agree with the notion that says if leaders and managers are fully equipped and empowered in terms of playing their roles at their respective institutions, their subordinates will also be developed from the skills, knowledge, values and positive attitude that they share with them. It is against this background that I believe leaders 'are not born but are made.'
- Research shows that there is a close relationship between successful leadership and effective/successful schools. There is acknowledgement that principals are key role players in the success of any school (Common Wealth Secretariat, 1996; National College for School Leadership, 2001; Bush, 2003).

- I strongly suggest that principals should work collaboratively with the entire staff and other stakeholders like parents/SGBs, Department of Education and School Community to realise the organisational goals. I also agree that schools/organisations either succeed or fail at the level of leadership and management.
- Staff members should be actively involved and pro-active in influencing decision making that enhances good quality of education and high levels of learner performance. This requires both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for the staff to perform to their maximum potential.
- If there are realistic expectations and continuous support for staff and principals by the Department of Education, at all critical levels; pressure to produce good results will be justified. Therefore, school individual needs should be attended to timeously and adequately by the Department of Education.
- The driving force behind this theory of effective teaching and learning is instructional leadership as envisaged by Bush (2007); Bush and Glover (2002); Leithwood, et al. (2006) and Hoadley (2007).

6.4.3 Parents at home

Parents should play their role in supporting their children and the schools in all aspects of life in order to realise the broader vision of the Gauteng Department of Education and their school vision. For instance the broad vision of the Gauteng Department of Education in South Africa currently is the following:

“all learners should be assisted to do well at school by ensuring that they exit those centres of excellence (schools) with all the skills, knowledge, values and qualifications which will create the best chances of success in their adult life (DBE, 2014).”

Therefore, the school vision should be in line with the broader vision of the Department of Education. The mission of the DBE is that: “every teacher should be in class every day to teach learners and learners should learn.”

Lastly the social, cultural and academic challenges that learners are grappling with both at school and at home should be attended to, because they have a negative impact on their performance at school. This warrants the collaboration between principals, staff, parents, their children and other relevant stakeholders, for the purpose of supporting the child in order to realise his/her own vision in life.

All our school activities should revolve around ensuring that a conducive atmosphere is created in all our schools for normal teaching and learning to take place. Instructional leadership will ensure that the core business in our schools, which is teaching and learning takes place if all leaders and managers understand their roles clearly and implement both departmental and school policies (Employment of Educators Act 74/1998; Bush, 2003, 2007, 2009, 2011; Kotter, 1990).

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APPENDICES

ANNEXURE 1

1/20/2015

JOHANNESBURG NORTH District (D10) 2014 Results

Presented by:
CES: Curriculum Delivery and Support

ANA Results 2013 & 2014 Grade 1 - 3

Subject	National		Province		JHB North	
	2013	2014	2013	2014	2013	2014
Mathematics (Gr 1)	60	68	65.0	73.9	72.0	92.2
Language HL (Gr 1)	61	63	65.4	67.2	66.2	78.1
Mathematics (Gr 2)	59	62	64.5	66.1	65.4	88.3
Language HL (Gr 2)	57	61	60.2	65.3	65.0	74.2
Mathematics (Gr 3)	59	62	64.5	66.1	65.4	88.3
Language HL (Gr 3)	57	61	60.2	65.3	65.0	74.2

What is vision

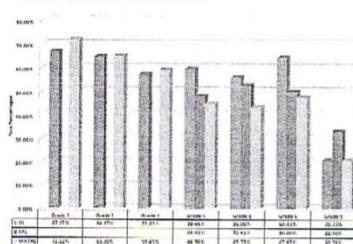
“Vision is the art of
seeing what is
invisible to
others”

Jonathan Swift

ANA Results 2013 & 2014 Grade 4 - 6

Subject	National		Province		JHB North	
	2013	2014	2013	2014	2013	2014
Mathematics (Gr 4)	43.8	44.4	40.1	41.3	45.0	59.0
Language HL (Gr 4)	53.4	59.4	59.9	71.1	64.0	81.3
Language FAL (Gr 4)	46.4	47.4	45.7	48.2	62.3	88.0
Mathematics (Gr 5)	40.8	45.7	33.9	44.0	43.3	55.3
Language HL (Gr 5)	51.6	59.8	56.1	72.4	64.1	78.1
Language FAL (Gr 5)	47.5	54.5	48.9	62.3	58.0	67.1
Mathematics (Gr 6)	39	43	44.7	50.0	47.5; 48.8	64.0
Language HL (Gr 6)	59	63	61.3	69.4	59.5; 62.5	83.2
Language FAL (Gr 6)	46	45	52.4	53.0	54.8; 52.9	66.2

ANA Results Grade 2014



ANA Results 2013 & 2014 Grade 9

Subject	National		Province		JHB North	
	2013	2014	2013	2014	2013	2014
Mathematics	14	11	15.9	12.9	20.0	12.9
Language HL	43	48	44.0	52.9	45.6	48.9
Language FAL	33	34	38.1	36.8	37.2	39.7

ANNEXURE 2

1/20/2015

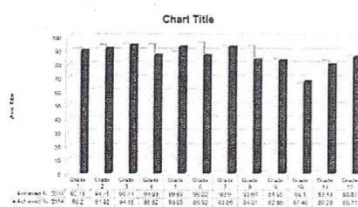
Learners' Performance 2014

Grade	11781	10620	92.15	90.20
Grade 1	11781	10620	92.15	90.20
Grade 2	11197	10281	94.45	91.82
Grade 3	10851	10219	95.11	94.18
Grade 4	10648	9255	94.93	90.92
Grade 5	9263	8619	89.59	93.05
Grade 6	10646	9255	96.22	86.92
Grade 7	8166	7599	93.90	93.06
Grade 8	7629	6406	93.94	84.01
Grade 9	7875	6525	84.55	82.88
Grade 10	11498	7758	66.10	67.48
Grade 11	9134	7333	83.13	80.28
Grade 12	6749	5693	86.83	85.71

COMPARISON OF DISTRICTS PERFORMANCE BETWEEN 2013 AND 2014

No	District	Total Entered	Total Wrote	Total Achieved	Achieved %	Total Entered	Total Wrote	Total Achieved	Achieved %	Difference
1	JS (D11)	6530	6272	5296	84.44	6111	5896	5176	87.79	3.35
2	GW (D2)	6406	6333	5703	90.05	5970	5964	5471	92.67	2.61
3	EN (D6)	9250	9116	8039	88.19	8099	8767	7780	88.74	0.56
4	JN (D10)	6448	6355	5518	86.83	6711	6607	5663	85.71	-1.12
5	GN (D1)	1748	1728	1529	88.48	1973	1914	1666	87.04	-1.44
6	TS (D4)	10522	10353	9163	88.51	10505	10296	8959	87.01	-1.49
7	TW (D15)	7401	7302	6250	85.59	6489	6529	5489	84.07	-1.52
8	SE (D7)	2606	2576	2337	90.72	2623	2587	2306	89.14	-1.58
9	IC (D14)	7767	7702	6537	84.87	8530	8440	6879	81.43	-3.45
10	W (D12)	4615	4556	4082	89.60	4922	4841	4168	86.10	-3.50
11	TN (D3)	6529	6466	5684	87.91	6276	6210	5214	83.96	-3.94
12	SW (D8)	5450	5354	4440	82.93	5034	5737	4526	78.89	-4.04
13	IE (D9)	7069	6969	6137	86.06	7056	7710	6473	83.96	-4.11
14	ES (D16)	10503	10308	8711	84.51	11310	11134	8878	79.74	-4.77
15	GE (D5)	6606	6507	5696	87.54	7046	6898	5599	81.17	-6.37
		99480	97897	85132	87.0	101212	99478	84247	84.7	

COMPARISON OF GRADES PERFORMANCE BETWEEN 2013 AND 2014



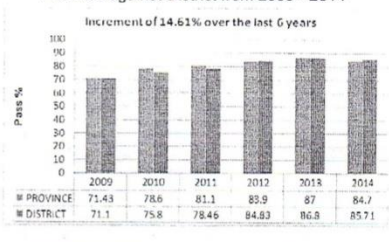
COMPARISON OF DISTRICTS PERFORMANCE BETWEEN 2013 AND 2014

No	District	2013			2014			Difference	Difference %	Difference # P
		Total Wrote	Total Achieve	Achieve %	Total Wrote	Total Achieve	Achieve %			
1	JS (D11)	6272	5296	84.44	5896	5176	87.79	3.35	376	-120
2	GW (D2)	6333	5703	90.05	5904	5417	92.67	2.61	-429	-259
3	EN (D6)	9116	8039	88.19	8767	7780	88.74	0.56	-349	-259
4	JN (D10)	6355	5518	86.83	6607	5663	85.71	-1.12	252	145
5	GN (D1)	1728	1529	88.48	1714	1666	87.04	-1.44	186	197
6	TS (D4)	10553	9163	88.51	10296	8959	87.01	-1.49	-57	-204
7	TW (D15)	7302	6250	85.59	6529	5489	84.07	-1.52	-773	-761
8	SE (D7)	2576	2337	90.72	2587	2306	89.14	-1.58	11	-31
9	IC (D14)	7702	6537	84.87	8440	6879	81.43	-3.45	746	342
10	W (D12)	4556	4082	89.60	4041	4168	86.10	-3.50	285	86
11	TN (D3)	6466	5684	87.91	6210	5214	83.96	-3.94	-256	-470
12	SW (D8)	5354	4440	82.93	5737	4526	78.89	-4.04	383	86
13	IE (D9)	6969	6137	86.06	7710	6473	83.96	-4.11	741	336
14	ES (D16)	10308	8711	84.51	11134	8878	79.74	-4.77	826	167
15	GE (D5)	6507	5696	87.54	6898	5599	81.17	-6.37	391	-97
		97897	85132	87.0	99478	84247	84.7		1501	-875

DISTRICTS PERFORMANCE BY RANK

No.	District	Number Entered	Number Wrote	Number Achieved	Achieved %
1	East Rand West (D2)	5978	5904	5471	92.67
2	Sedibeng East (D7)	2623	2587	2306	89.14
3	Ekurhuleni North (D6)	8899	8767	7780	88.74
4	Johannesburg South (D11)	6111	5896	5176	87.79
5	Gauteng North (D1)	1973	1914	1666	87.04
6	Tshwane South (D4)	10505	10296	8959	87.01
7	Johannesburg West (D12)	4922	4841	4168	86.10
8	Johannesburg North (D10)	6711	6607	5663	85.71
9	Tshwane West (D15)	6638	6529	5489	84.07
10	Tshwane North (D3)	6276	6210	5214	83.96
11	Johannesburg East (D9)	7856	7710	6473	83.96
12	Johannesburg Central (D14)	8530	8440	6879	81.43
13	Gauteng East (D5)	7046	6898	5599	81.17
14	Ekurhuleni South (D16)	11310	11134	8878	79.74
15	Sedibeng West (D8)	5834	5737	4526	78.89
		101212	99478	84247	84.7

Province against District from 2009 - 2014



MB. The hand written numbers in the middle of this annexure 2 indicate the position of each district in 2013 and 2014 ANA results respectively.

ANNEXURE 3

1/20/2015

Provincial Results

- Gauteng is top performing province in the country for NCS 2014, at 84.7% Pass
- Although our results declined by 2.3 %.
- A total of 84 247 candidates passed
- Total Number of Distinctions 34 998
- 36 843 qualifying for a bachelor's degree
- Bachelor's pass percentage of 37%
- With 35 903 distinctions

Top schools in Bachelor's % (100 – 80)

1	McCauley	100	100.00
2	Parktown Girls	98.48	99.53
3	Hoerskool Linden	88.24	84.78
4	UJ Metropolitan	87.50	94.38
5	Northcliff	87.05	84.70
6	Fourways High School	82.08	

District Results

- Exams in the District had minor incident.
- One serious irregularity was registered in the District
- The District pass rate declined by 1.12% to 85.7%
- Retained position 8 in the Province, at 6.96% below the top district in the Province
- A total of 6 807 candidates passed NSC, 257 more than in 2013
- Total number of distinctions is 2 861 while last year were 3 304, and 2 895 candidates qualified for a bachelor's degree that's 11 more than last year.
- Bachelors are 43.87%

Results Per Circuit 1

	2010	2011	2012	2013		2014			
	% Pass	% Pass	% Pass	% Pass	% Pass	Distinctions	No. Passed	No. Bachelors	No. Bachelors
Van Lamsche	67.5	82.4	84.85	88.77	88.18	16	152	131	59
Benmore	98.0	97	97	95.65	90.38	35	104	84	84
Progress	60.8	68.2	68.10	80.80	77.24	10	145	112	49
Mass High	68.0	68.0	65.95	83.06	78.12	5	93	68	22
Therese Institute	78.8	88.8	83.23	82.53	82.06	14	142	167	46
Diepsloot	59.9	59.7	78.65	87.64	77.27	17	154	116	64
Emmankuiland	59.8	57.9	76.76	80	84.81	10	163	120	45
Benmore	76.8	55.7	61.19	73.21	61.64	0	73	45	4
Ben	49.5	53.3	68.85	76.58	64.77	29	183	126	25

High Risks Subjects – Performance 2013 & 2014

Subjects	Lev 1	Lev 2	Lev 3	Lev 4	Lev 5	Lev 6	Lev 7	Pass % '13	Pass % '14
Accounting	488	294	194	107	108	143	171	70.33	70.0
Business Stud	307	599	689	529	377	213	120	89.24	89.1
Economics	360	482	312	179	113	88	35	82.38	77.2
English FAL	13	235	1110	1215	547	138	72	88.76	88.0
Geography	342	780	798	629	377	185	64	87.58	88.0
History	202	388	565	530	372	254	135	90.28	91.7
Life Sciences	705	726	584	475	376	279	198	81.28	78.9
Mathematics	635	405	375	342	313	232	198	73.58	75.8
Multis Lit	282	729	1015	808	658	431	207	93.88	93.8
Physical Science	519	381	323	237	247	148	120	75.60	73.7

Results Per Circuit 2

	2010	2011	2012	2013		2014			
	% Pass	% Pass	% Pass	% Pass	% Pass	Distinctions	No. Passed	No. Bachelors	No. Bachelors
Diepsloot-Impleto	49.0	38	37	68.42	67.86	11	28	10	8
Diepsloot	77.6	81.7	79.48	88.27	86.96	14	132	114	46
Diepsloot-Langlaats	56.6	79	70	79.14	81.50	13	157	87	27
JES	57.9	80	72	71.83	81.71	47	164	154	42
Leefstede	74.6	81.2	82.38	84.72	83.71	17	154	132	43
Muller	78.4	60.5	66.67	66.67	65.79	12	28	17	9
Namoli	78.4	70.9	86.56	79.83	81.80	17	93	84	34
New Ntuen	01.4	74	65	75	89.68	12	62	37	4
Noordgesig Sec	67.0	76	81	84.68	84.18	58	158	133	41
Orlando	40.5	59.6	87.71	74.21	72.93	29	181	132	49
Riverlea Sec	73.9	79	79	70.1	78.81	11	84	62	17
NAMA	69.0	48	54	100	100	43	62	39	19
Seibels	63.2	58.9	62.28	85.71	85.47	21	177	147	51
Teik Academy	75	41	41	62.5	60.97	7	31	22	5

1/20/2015

Performance of Circuits 2014

Circuit Performance

Circuit	2013	2014
Circuit 1	77.56	77.2
Circuit 2	80.49	78.35
Circuit 3	92.53	90.15
Circuit 4	92.65	87.47

[illegible]

- District Interventions
 - District reflections on 2013 possible factors for decline,
 - Profiling of schools by Circuits and CLI
 - Monitoring allocations by CLI/IDSO as per subjects performance
 - Implementations of Legislations on underperforming schools:
 - SASA section 5B,
 - Circular 38/2007 and
 - Circular 25/2008

Possible factors for poor performance

SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

- Good school management makes a big difference to how well children do at school
- School resources — such as pupil to teacher ratios and school facilities — don't make a big difference to test results but good school management was consistently related to good learning outcomes.
- The principal present, monitoring how many teachers were absent, and the state of the teacher attendance registers.
- In schools where the teacher attendance register is not up to date, teacher absenteeism is twice as high as schools where it was.

WRITTEN WORK

- The more written and numerical work that was done during the year, the better children performed in the annual tests

Conclusion

"Keep your dreams alive.
Understand to achieve anything
requires faith and belief in
yourself, vision, hard work,
determination and dedication.
Remember all things are possible
for those who believe." Gail Devers

Possible factors for poor performance

LANGUAGE

- Instruction in English from Grade 4 (which is government policy) is a disadvantage for speakers of other home languages
- Mother-tongue instruction is not practical in an urban, multilingual environment.

THE CURRICULUM

- The biggest problem with the curriculum is that it is not covered
- Only a small portion of the primary and secondary school curriculum is covered by teachers.

TEACHERS LACK KNOWLEDGE

- Most South African teachers know little more about the subjects they teach than the curriculum demands of their children.

The best is yet to come.

Believe
Believe

Possible factors for poor performance

Challenges associated with learners

1. **Deficits in specific capabilities.** Children who have specific learning disabilities, attention deficits or cognitive deficits often present a confusing mixture of abilities and disabilities.
2. **Lack of developmental readiness,** not ready for formal education in basic school subjects. Poor concentration, memory, ability to follow through on projects and coordination.
3. **Lack of emotional freedom to learn,** children whose anxiety level is too high are unable to attend to the learning process.
4. **Lack of motivation** a combination of verbal rewards and punishments is more effective for reinforcement of learning
5. **Learners' ill-discipline**

TABLE 20**SUMMARY TABLE FOR ANNUAL NATIONAL ASSESSMENT FROM 2012 – 2014**

In 2014 the overall results for ANA in Grade 1-6 point towards an upward movement of test scores, while in Grade 9 Mathematics, the performance of learners has remained at low level as was the case in 2012 and 2013. Over the last three years the analysis of provincial trends in the ANA indicate that as a sector we are making strides in the foundation and intermediate phases in both Languages and Mathematics.

In the summary table below, the average national percentages that learners achieved in Mathematics and Languages are indicated.

GRADE	MATHEMATICS %	AVERAGE %	PERCENTAGE %
	2012	2013	2014
1	68	60	68
2	57	59	62
3	41	53	56
4	37	37	37
5	30	33	37
6	27	39	43
9	13	14	11

Summary Table for Home Language in 2012, 2013 and 2014

GRADE	HOME LANGUAGE % 2012	HOME LANGUAGE % 2013	HOME LANGUAGE % 2014
1	58	61	63
2	55	57	61
3	52	51	56
4	43	49	57
5	40	46	57
6	43	59	63
9	43	43	48

Summary Table for First Additional Language in 2012, 2013 and 2014

GRADE	FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE % - 2012	FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE %- 2013	FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE %- 2014
4	34	39	41
5	30	37	47
6	36	46	45
9	35	33	34

The 2014 Report also contains valuable information on provincial performance. The results suggest that in the foundation phase, there are noteworthy increases across all provinces in overall scores of Languages and Mathematics. For example in Gauteng, the average percentage mark was above 60% across Grade 1 to 3 in both subjects. In the intermediate phase learners in Grade 6 are performing well in the Home Language and across all the provinces.

University of Witwatersrand
School of Education
27 St Andrews Street
Parktown
2001

Invitation to Principal to participate in a research study

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Sithembile Lucas Khumalo and I am an educator at Lulama Higher Primary School, as well as a part-time student at the School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand. I am currently conducting research that is required for my Master's degree.

The focus of my research is on: **The role of principal as an instructional leader on improving learner achievement in township schools.** Your school has been selected on the basis of its good ANA results regardless of the adverse circumstances under which you operate. I would like to invite you to participate in this research study.

Should your school participate, the study will require that I conduct one-on-one interviews with you as the head of the school, two deputy principals or HOD's(SMT members), TWO educators, two learners in Grade 7 and two parents. Each interview will last for at least 30 minutes, with yours and each learner taking 60 minutes and 15 minutes respectively. These interviews will focus on good leadership practices within the school.

I will be visiting your school to describe the study in detail and answer any questions that you or the other participants may have.

Please indicate your willingness to participate in this study by completing the consent slip below.

Yours sincerely

Mr S.L Khumalo

Researcher

Principal consent slip for school

I, _____, as (position) _____ on behalf of _____
School, understand the nature, requirements and benefits of participating in the study, consent to participate in the study / do not consent to participate in the study.

Signature _____ Date _____

University of Witwatersrand
School of Education

27 St Andrews Street
Parktown
2001

To the Principal

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Sithembile Lucas Khumalo and I am an educator at Lulama Higher Primary School, as well as a part-time student at the School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand. I am currently conducting research that is required for my Master's degree.

The focus of my research is on: **Successful schools in challenging circumstances and the role that principals play in promoting good leadership practices?** Your school has been selected on the basis of its good ANA results regardless of the challenges you are faced with.

I would like to invite you to become a participant in this investigation. Please note that your participation is voluntary and refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to your future work with the researcher or the University. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

Should you wish to participate; the study will require that I conduct one-on-one interviews with you as the principal of the school and the interview will last for at most 60 minutes. These interviews will focus on your leadership practices within your school.

Anonymity is guaranteed. Your responses to the questions will not be seen by anyone apart from my supervisor and me. All data will be kept by me or archived in the Education library at the University of Witwatersrand.

Please indicate your willingness to participate by completing the consent slip below. If there are any queries I can be contacted on 082 700 5678 or email sithembilekhumalo89@gmail.com

Thanking you in advance

Mr S.L KHUMALO
082 700 5678

Consent slip of the Principal

I, _____, am willing to participate / I am not willing to participate in this research study.

I understand the nature, requirements and benefits of participating in this study. I understand that I may discontinue participation at any time.

Signed consent of participant

Date: _____

University of Witwatersrand
School of Education
27 St Andrews Street
Parktown
2001

To the District

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Sithembile Lucas Khumalo and I am an educator at Lulama Higher Primary School, as well as a part-time student at the School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand. I am currently conducting research that is required for my Master's degree.

The focus of my research is on: **Successful schools in challenging circumstances and the role that principals play in promoting good leadership practices?** The school under your jurisdiction has been selected on the basis of its good ANA results regardless of the challenges they are faced with.

I would like to invite you to become a participant in this investigation. Please note that your participation is voluntary and refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to your future work with the researcher or the University. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

Should you wish to participate; the study will require that I conduct one-on-one interviews with you as the District Official of the school and the interview will last for at most 60 minutes. These interviews will focus on your leadership practices within your school.

Anonymity is guaranteed. Your responses to the questions will not be seen by anyone apart from my supervisor and me. All data will be kept by me or archived in the Education library at the University of Witwatersrand.

Please indicate your willingness to participate by completing the consent slip below. If there are any queries I can be contacted on 082 700 5678 or email sithembilekhumalo89@gmail.com

Thanking you in advance

Mr S.L KHUMALO
082 700 5678

Consent slip of the District

I, _____, am willing to participate / I am not willing to participate in this research study.

I understand the nature, requirements and benefits of participating in this study. I understand that I may discontinue participation at any time.

Signed consent of the participant

Date: _____

University of Witwatersrand
School of Education
27 St Andrews Street
Parktown
2001

To the Deputy Principal

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Sithembile Lucas Khumalo and I am an educator at Lulama Higher Priamry School, as well as a part-time student at the School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand. I am currently conducting research that is required for my Master's degree.

The focus of my research is on: **Successful schools in challenging circumstances. What role do principals play in promoting good leadership practices?**

I would like to invite you to become a participant in this investigation. Please note that your participation is voluntary and refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to your future work with the researcher or the University. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

Should you wish to participate; the study will require that I conduct one-on-one interviews with you as the Deputy Principal of the school, each interview lasting for at least 30 minutes. These interviews will focus on the leadership you have experienced in your school as the Deputy Principal.

Anonymity is guaranteed. Your responses to the questions will not be seen by anyone apart from my supervisor and me. All data will be kept by me or archived in the Education library at the University of Witwatersrand.

Please indicate your willingness to participate in this study by completing the consent slip below. If there are any queries I can be contacted on 082 700 5678 or email sithembilekhumalo89@gmail.com

Thanking you in advance

Mr S.L Khumalo
082 700 5678

Consent slip of the Deputy Principal

I, _____, am willing to participate / I am not willing to participate in this research study. I understand the nature, requirements and benefits of participating in the study. I understand that I may discontinue participation at any time.

Signed consent of participant

Date: _____

University of Witwatersrand
School of Education
27 St Andrews Street
Parktown
2001

To the HOD

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Sithembile Lucas Khumalo and I am an educator at Lulama Higher Primary School, as well as a part-time student at the School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand. I am currently conducting research that is required for my Master's degree.

The focus of my research is on: **Successful schools in challenging circumstances. What role do principals play in promoting good leadership practices?**

I would like to invite you to become a participant in this investigation. Please note that your participation is voluntary and refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to your future work with the researcher or the University. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

Should you wish to participate; the study will require that I conduct one-on-one interviews with you as the HOD of the school, each interview lasting for at least 30 minutes. These interviews will focus on the leadership you have experienced in your school as the HOD.

Anonymity is guaranteed. Your responses to the questions will not be seen by anyone apart from my supervisor and me. All data will be kept by me or archived in the Education library at the University of Witwatersrand.

Please indicate your willingness to participate in this study by completing the consent slip below. If there are any queries I can be contacted on 082 700 5678 or email sithembilekhumalo89@gmail.com

Thanking you in advance

Mr S.L Khumalo
082 700 5678

Consent slip of the HOD

I, _____, am willing to participate / I am not willing to participate in this research study. I understand the nature, requirements and benefits of participating in the study. I understand that I may discontinue participation at any time.

Signed consent of the participant

Date _____

University of Witwatersrand
School of Education

27 St Andrews Street
Parktown
2001

To the Educator

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Sithembile Lucas Khumalo and I am an educator at Lulama Higher Primary School, as well as a part-time student at the School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand. I am currently conducting research that is required for my Master's degree.

The focus of my research is on: **Successful schools in challenging circumstances. What role do principals play in promoting good leadership practices?**

I would like to invite you to become a participant in this investigation. Please note that your participation is voluntary and refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to your future work with the researcher or the University. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

Should you wish to participate; the study will require that I conduct one-on-one interviews with you as an educator of the school, each interview lasting for at least 30 minutes. These interviews will focus on the role of leadership that you have experienced in your school as an educator

Anonymity is guaranteed. Your responses to the questions will not be seen by anyone apart from my supervisor and me. All data will be kept by me or archived in the Education library at the University of Witwatersrand.

Please indicate your willingness to participate in this study by completing the consent slip below. If there are any queries I can be contacted on 082 700 5678 or email sithembilekhumalo89@gmail.com

Thanking you in advance

Mr S.L Khumalo
082 700 5678

Consent slip of the educator

I, _____, am willing to participate / I am not willing to participate in this research study. I understand the nature, requirements and benefits of participating in the study. I understand that I may discontinue participation at any time.

Signed consent of participant

Date: _____

University of Witwatersrand
School of Education

27 St Andrews Street
Parktown
2001

To the Parent

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Sithembile Lucas Khumalo and I am an educator at Lulama Higher Primary School, as well as a part-time student at the School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand. I am currently conducting research that is required for my Master's degree.

The focus of my research is on: **Successful schools in challenging circumstances. What role do principals play in promoting good leadership practices?**

I would like to invite you to become a participant in this investigation as your child is fortunate to be in a school that is able to maintain a high standard of education regardless of its challenging circumstances. Please note that your participation is voluntary and refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to your future work with the researcher or the University. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

Should you wish to participate; the study will require that I conduct one-on-one interviews with you as a parent serving in the School Governing Body of the school or by virtue of you having a child at this school, each interview lasting for at least 30 minutes. These interviews will focus on the leadership you have observed as a parent serving in the School Governing Body or an ordinary parent.

Anonymity is guaranteed. Your responses to the questions will not be seen by anyone apart from my supervisor and me. All data will be kept by me or archived in the Education library at the University of Witwatersrand.

Please indicate your willingness to participate in this study by completing the consent slip below

If there are any queries I can be contacted on 082 700 5678 or email

sithembilekhumalo89@gmail.com

Thanking you in advance

Mr S.L Khumalo
082 700 5678

Consent slip of Parent

I, _____, am willing to participate / I am not willing to participate in this research study. I understand the nature, requirements and benefits of participating in the study. I understand that I may discontinue participation at any time.

Signed consent of participant

Date: _____

Sample Questions for the Semi Structured Interviews

The Principal

1. As a leader of the school how would you describe your leadership style?
2. How do you understand or maintain your role as the principal?
3. In what ways are you involved with the curriculum of the school?
4. How have you managed to improve learner performances?
5. What is your thinking around professional development?
6. What is your understanding of the core practices of a school?
7. Do you feel that empowering teachers is important in your school?
8. How are you perceived by the teachers in your school?
9. Do you feel community involvement is essential to developing your school?
10. Describe some important attributes of yourself?
11. Do you think challenges of any nature are handled professionally and effectively? Why?

The Deputy Principal

1. What leadership role do you play in the functionality of the school?
2. How do you contribute to curriculum development?
3. Do you feel that you are given guidance in leadership?
4. How seriously are your contributions taken in the governance of the school?
5. What leadership style do you think your principal adopts?
6. Do teachers value your input in staff development?
7. What leadership style would you implement if you were the principal?
8. How do you see your principals' leadership promoting good practices?
9. What do you see as the main function of the leadership?
10. Would you ever consider becoming a principal yourself?
11. Do you think challenges of any nature are handled professionally and effectively at school? Why?

The HOD's

1. What leadership role do you play in the functionality of the school?
2. How do you contribute to curriculum development?
3. Do you feel that you are given guidance in leadership?
4. How seriously are your contributions taken in the governance of the school?
5. What leadership style do you think your principal adopts?
6. Do teachers value your input in staff development?
7. What leadership style would you implement if you were the principal?
8. How do you see your principals' leadership promoting good practices?
9. What do you see as the main function of the leadership?
10. Would you ever consider becoming a principal yourself?
11. Do you think challenges of any nature are dealt with in a professional and effective manner? Why?

The Educator's

1. What leadership role do you play in the functionality of the school?
2. How do you contribute to curriculum development?
3. Do you feel that you are given guidance in leadership?
4. How seriously are your contributions taken in the governance of the school?
5. What leadership style do you think your principal adopts?
6. Do teachers value your input in staff development?
7. What leadership style would you implement if you were the principal?
8. How do you see your principals' leadership promoting good practices?
9. What do you see as the main function of the leadership?
10. Would you ever consider becoming a principal yourself?
11. Do you think challenges of any nature are handled professionally and effectively? Why?

The Parent's

1. Why have you chosen this school for your child/children to attend?
2. Do you feel the school involves you as the parent in educating your child?
3. Does the school value your input as a parent?
4. Are you notified on school pertaining matters?
5. Is your child happy to come to school?
6. Does the school promote good teaching and learning?
7. How are you as a parent encouraged to assist your child by the school?
8. Is the principal willing to see you on issues of concern?
9. How accommodating is the staff of this school?
10. Do you think the principal is approachable and friendly?
11. Do you think challenges of any nature are handled properly and effectively when they arise? Why?

The GDE official's

1. What do you think are the contributing factors towards the success of the school under your jurisdiction?
2. How often do you give them support if any?
3. What is the nature and form of support that you give to other schools in similar conditions?
4. How do you measure the effectiveness and efficiency of your intervention strategies in township schools if any?
5. Are the results in ANA a reliable source of information for measuring success of our schools and quality of education that is being offered by the schools? Why?



Wits School of Education

27 St Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193 Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa. Tel: +27 11 717-3064 Fax: +27 11 717-3100 E-mail: enquiries@educ.wits.ac.za Website: www.wits.ac.za

16 January 2015

Student Number: 0200789D

Protocol Number: 2014ECE038M

Dear Sithembile Khumalo

Application for Ethics Clearance: Master of Education

Thank you very much for your ethics application. The Ethics Committee in Education of the Faculty of Humanities, acting on behalf of the Senate, has considered your application for ethics clearance for your proposal entitled:

The role of principal as an instructional leader on improving learner achievement in township schools

The committee recently met and I am pleased to inform you that clearance was granted.

Please use the above protocol number in all correspondence to the relevant research parties (schools, parents, learners etc.) and include it in your research report or project on the title page.

The Protocol Number above should be submitted to the Graduate Studies in Education Committee upon submission of your final research report.

All the best with your research project.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Mabeki'.

Wits School of Education

011 717-3416

Cc Supervisor: Dr Z Mbokazi

**GAUTENG PROVINCE**Department of Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICAFor administrative use:
Reference no. D2015 / 352 A**GDE AMENDED RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER**

Date:	1 December 2014
Validity of Research Approval:	9 February 2015 to 2 October 2015
Previous GDE Research Approval letter reference number	D2016/216 dated 18 July 2014
Name of Researcher:	Khumalo S.L.
Address of Researcher:	P.O. Box 5580
	Igologolo Street Ext 4
	Protea Glen
	1819
Telephone Number:	011 933 1303; 082 700 5678
Fax Number:	011 938 9364
Email address:	sithembilekhumalo89@gmail.com
Research Topic:	The role of the principal as an instructional leader on improving learner achievement in township schools
Number and type of schools:	TWO Primary Schools
Districts/HO	Johannesburg North

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SCB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

2014/12/02

1

Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Knowledge Management and Research

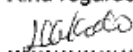
9th Floor, 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2001
P.O. Box 7710, Johannesburg, 2000 Tel: (011) 355 0506
Email: David.Makhavane@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gauteng.gov.za

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

1. *The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s concerned must be presented with a copy of this letter that would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.*
2. *The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.*
3. *A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.*
4. *A letter / document that outlines the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.*
5. *The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.*
6. *Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Director (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.*
7. *Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.*
8. *Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.*
9. *It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.*
10. *The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.*
11. *The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.*
12. *On completion of the study the researcher/s must supply the Director: Knowledge Management & Research with one Hard Cover bound and an electronic copy of the research.*
13. *The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.*
14. *Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.*

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards



Dr David Makhado

Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: 2014/12/02

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Making education a societal priority